

Ali Ahmed

4222 Vermont Av Alexandria, VA 22304

Dear City Council,

My name is Ali Ahmed. I taught for 20 years at Alexandria Public Schools and drove Taxi since 1978. I came here today to ask you literally save my life and that of many Alexandria taxi cab drivers. Today, I could hardly afford to pay for the medications that I need in order to stay healthy and be productive.

1. Our livelihoods are in danger because of the crisis Uber, Lift and limousines created in our industry. With thousands of Uber cars on our roads, no taxi-driver can get enough fares to feed our families. To put an end to the financial despair, debt, and poverty that is literally killing our brother and sisters, we, cabdrivers say that ride-share services have an unfair advantage because, in most cases, they are allowed to operate free of the rules, regulations and licensing requirements of traditional taxis.
2. In the meantime, I am also paying a monthly stand due of \$280.00 to my cab company (KING Cab) regardless whether I make less money, sick or even if my car breaks down.
3. Perhaps, in my case, this council would allow me to transfer from King Cab to Union Cab of Alexandria. This will save me approximately \$150 a month which will help me to afford my medications. Another good option for me would be a new medallion issued to me by the city, since the city of Alexandria has them reserve. Both these two choices could alleviate my hardship.

Sincerely,


Ali Ahmed 703 628 5811

02/23/2019

A statement by Bert Ely to the Alexandria City Council about the public safety and health hazards posed by electric scooters

February 23, 2019

Mr. Mayor and members of Council, I am Bert Ely and I live at 200 South Pitt. I come before you to speak, only for myself, about the public safety and health hazards posed by the electric scooters whose operation Council recently authorized.

Anyone walking in Old Town cannot help but notice all the electric scooters scattered hither and yon. How cute and harmless they look, reminding us of the scooters we all rode as little kids, but these electric scooters are far from harmless, for they pose serious health and financial risks, and not just to scooter operators, but to the public, too.

I have attached to this statement a copy of two articles Washington Post reporter Peter Holley has written about electric-scooter accidents around the country that have caused serious injuries and even deaths, incidents that are very troubling.

These articles have focused on injuries to scooter operators, but no doubt there have been injuries to innocent pedestrians hit by an electric scooter. Please read, for example, about Ashanti Jordan of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, who now lies in a vegetative state in a Florida hospital after an accident on a scooter she was operating.

Not mentioned in these articles is the financial risk posed by electric scooters. My insurance agent has advised me that scooter operators are not covered by their homeowners or automobile insurance policies for accidents or injuries they may cause to themselves or to others while operating an electric scooter or if hit by a scooter.

While I have been advised by attorneys that the City has protected itself against any liability arising from scooter accidents, that protection does not extend to scooter operators or to anyone or any property hit by a recklessly operated scooter.

If one of you were hit and seriously injured by an electric scooter, who would you collect from to obtain a financial recovery for your injuries, permanent disability, or lost income? Even if you obtained a court judgment, how much would you collect if the scooter operator could not pay and instead filed for bankruptcy?

Unlike for motor vehicles, presently no insurance is required for the uninsured operators of electric scooters.

What is quite interesting, as Mr. Holley reports, is that electric scooters are increasingly recognized as a public-health hazard. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “is studying the health risks associated with e-scooters by analyzing injuries to riders and pedestrians in Austin [Texas] over two months.” The study should be finalized this spring.

According to Mr. Holley's most recent article, in Fort Lauderdale over a two-month period there were 40 incidents involving scooters. "A total of 31 of them required someone to be transported to the hospital, and four of those were level-1 traumas," which is the most serious form of a health trauma.

Electric scooter accidents have become so common that they triggered an article in the Journal of the American Medical Association that Mr. Holley cites in one of his articles.

In light of the injury experience of electric scooters and the City's commitment to Vision Zero, the City should immediately begin tallying scooter-related accidents and injuries so that it has that data available when Council decides whether to continue permitting the operation of electric scooters in the city.

Hopefully, Council will soon ban these scooters from the city's streets and sidewalks.

Thank you for your time today – I welcome your questions.

A Lime scooter accident left Ashanti Jordan in a vegetative state. Now her mother is suing on her behalf

Lime's app instructed the 28-year-old to break the law, the family's lawyer says

By Peter Holley
The Washington Post
February 11, 2019

Most days, when Ashanti Jordan's shift at Broward General Medical Center ended, she got a ride home from co-workers.

But on a sunny day in late December, the outgoing 28-year-old security guard decided she would make the four-mile journey home on a Lime scooter, one of many found on the streets of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., according to family members. Jordan, who was not wearing a helmet at the time, was about halfway home when she collided with a Toyota Corolla at an intersection in a residential area.

The violent collision threw Jordan about 100 feet and left her with broken bones, rib fractures and a catastrophic brain injury, family members say. To relieve pressure on her swollen brain, doctors had to remove a large portion of her skull. Now, more than six weeks after the accident, Jordan remains in a persistent vegetative state and has begun having seizures, forcing doctors to return her to the hospital's intensive care unit in recent days, family members say.

On Monday, Tracy Jordan announced plans to sue Lime — one of the world's largest electric-scooter companies — on her daughter's behalf for negligence, according to Todd R. Falzone, a Fort Lauderdale personal injury lawyer representing Tracy Jordan as the guardian of her daughter. Falzone said Lime's app includes language that specifically instructs people not to operate scooters on local sidewalks, pushing them onto city streets instead.

Many experts consider motorized scooters dangerous, and operating them on the street is against the law in Florida, although Fort Lauderdale does permit e-scooters to be ridden on sidewalks. Because Jordan followed Lime's instructions, Falzone said, she avoided the sidewalk and was catastrophically injured.

"To this day they are telling users to break the law, and, as a result, people are doing that," Falzone said at a news conference Monday. "They are getting hit by cars, they are hitting pedestrians, they're having all manner of accidents that shouldn't be occurring.

"Unfortunately," he added, "Ashanti is going to pay for this with her life."

Lime did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The lawsuit arrives about a week after a 21-year-old exchange student from Ireland was killed in an accident involving a Lime scooter and vehicle in Austin. Police said Mark Sands was traveling in the wrong direction on a Lime scooter on a busy downtown street in the early morning hours of Feb. 1 when he was struck by an Uber driver, leaving him badly injured. He was taken to Dell Seton Medical Center, where he died the next day, authorities said.

He appears to be the third person killed in an accident involving Lime scooters in recent months.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is studying the health risks associated with e-scooters by analyzing injuries to riders and pedestrians in Austin over two months. Last week, a CDC spokesperson told The Washington Post that the study should be finalized in the spring. In Fort Lauderdale, where e-scooters arrived in November, high-profile accidents have made the devices hugely controversial, according to the South Florida Sun Sentinel.

“According to Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue, between Dec. 1 and Jan. 31, there have been 40 incidents involving scooters,” ABC affiliate WPLG reported. “A total of 31 of them required someone be transported to the hospital, and four of those were level-1 traumas.”

Lime — which has received hefty investments from Uber and Alphabet — has been valued at more than \$1 billion, according to Bloomberg News, despite the company admitting that some of its models have caught on fire and broken in half while people are riding them. At the same time investment money was pouring into Lime, injured scooter riders began pouring into emergency rooms nationwide, leading some doctors to accuse companies such as Bird and Lime of spawning a public health crisis.

Falzone said the Jordan family is one of the most tragic examples of that crisis. If the company’s app is instructing people to violate local laws in one city, he said, riders in other cities could be at risk as well.

Falzone provided The Post with an image that he said came from the Lime app’s “rules and regulations.” The rules — to which riders must “agree” to operate the scooter — included the following sentence: “Do not ride on the sidewalk.” In addition to being printed on the outside of the scooter, that same message appears three separate times in the app, Falzone said. He accused Lime of violating its operating agreement with Fort Lauderdale, which requires the company to inform riders how to safely and legally operate their scooters.

“I’m worried about people around the country who are riding these things and not understanding whether they’re supposed to be riding them on the street or on the sidewalk,” he said. “You rely on the company to know the local rules.”

Falzone said his client is seeking compensatory damages that cover potential disabilities, mental anguish, hospital expenses, as well as long-term medical care and loss of income.

Before she was injured, Falzone said, Jordan was an outgoing woman with an independent personality, with lots of friends and a love of hip-hop. After high school, he said, she decided she wanted work construction, boldly inserting herself into a profession dominated by men. Despite her toughness, he said, she has always had a special connection with children, whether they were her four siblings or her neighbors.

In recent years, Falzone said, Jordan took a job in security at Broward General Medical Center, the same hospital where her mother works. The job allowed the two women to stay close, he said, but Tracy Jordan never expected to see her daughter admitted to their workplace as a patient.

At Monday’s news conference, Jordan said her daughter is still young, which could aid in her recovery. She remains faithful, she said, but reminders of her daughter’s suffering are hard to avoid on the streets of Fort Lauderdale.

“I just can’t even stand to see a scooter, it’s so traumatizing at this point,” she said. “I have to cover my eyes.”

Electric scooters send more people to the hospital than bicycles and walking, new study finds

By [Peter Holley](#),
The Washington Post
January 25, 2019

Over a one-year period in two Los Angeles emergency departments, more people were injured while riding standing electric scooters than by riding bicycles or traveling on foot, according to the results of a groundbreaking study.

Documenting injury statistics from September 2017 to August 2018, the study published this week in the medical journal JAMA Network Open found that many injuries were serious in nature, if not severe.

Of the 249 patients who received treatment for scooter-related injuries, nearly 28 percent suffered contusions, sprains and lacerations. About 30 percent had fractures, and just over 40 percent were treated for head injuries, the study found. Nearly all the patients were discharged from the emergency departments, but 15 were admitted to a hospital, including two with severe head injuries who were placed in intensive care units.

During the same period at the two emergency departments, researchers identified 195 visits for bicyclist injuries and 181 visits for pedestrian injuries.

“The Riders share roads with fast-moving vehicular traffic but appear to underestimate hazards; we found that 94.3% of observed riders in our community were not wearing a helmet,” the study said of scooter users. “While riders of electric scooters in California are required to be at least 16 years old by state law and 18 years old by company rental agreements, we found that 10.8% of electric scooter injuries were in patients younger than 18 years.”

The study added, “Although California law required helmet use while operating electric scooters during the entire study period, only 4.4% of injured scooter riders were documented to be wearing a helmet.”

[Scooter use is rising in major cities. So are trips to the emergency room.]

As electric scooters companies like Bird and Lime began dumping tens of thousands of scooters in dozens of cities around the country this past summer, injured riders began pouring into emergency rooms, according to trauma doctors. Ever since, those doctors — many of them shocked by the severity of their patients' injuries — have been documenting the injuries to get a better sense of how e-scooters have affected cities.

Some health professionals have referred to the wave of injuries as a “public health crisis.” Last month, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced plans to study the health risks associated with the two-wheeled vehicles by analyzing injuries to riders and pedestrians in Austin over two months.

E-scooters are not only injuring riders. This month, Wally Ghurabi, medical director of the Nethercutt Emergency Center at the UCLA Medical Center in Santa Monica, told The Washington Post that e-scooters pose significant dangers to elderly pedestrians and the disabled.

“I’ve seen pedestrians injured by scooters with broken hips, multiple bone fractures, broken ribs and joint injuries and soft tissue injuries like lacerations and deep abrasions,” Ghurabi said, estimating he sees several people injured by e-scooters each week.

The JAMA study appears to be the first and most comprehensive study of injury patterns associated with e-scooter injuries to date, offering a window into how people are using the new form of technology.

In recent months, numerous riders have reported being injured by scooters that malfunction, throwing riders off the vehicles at high speed. Last year, Lime — one of the world’s largest scooter companies — was forced to issue two recalls after The Post reported that some scooters carried batteries capable of catching fire and others included baseboards that split in half while people rode them.

In a statement emailed to The Post, Lime said the safety of riders and the community is the company’s “number one priority.” Lime said it has upgraded its scooters with better wheels and suspension, as well as additional braking and improved balance.

“We believe continued government investment in protected bike lanes and paths is critical,” the statement added. “Lime supports the AMA’s study recommendations to further innovate helmet designs and for the industry to continue focusing on safety.”

Paul Steely White, Bird’s director of safety policy and advocacy, said the company hopes for an opportunity to have a “collaborative conversation” with the study’s authors focused on “proven preventative measures and education.”

“While the report importantly highlights the parity in safety between bicycles and e-scooters, it fails to take into account the sheer number of e-scooter trips taken — the number of injuries reported would amount to a fraction of one percent of the total number of e-scooter rides,” White said. “Moreover, the report fails to put e-scooter injuries into context as they relate to the high number and severity of injuries and deaths caused by motorcycles and automobiles.”

The study does not discount the appeal of electric scooters and calls them an “innovative” form of transportation with the potential to alleviate traffic congestion. In a commentary included in the study, Frederick P. Rivara, a professor of pediatrics and adjunct professor of epidemiology at the University of Washington, said researchers are not “troglodytes trying to stuff the genie back in the bottle” Two-wheeled rental vehicles, he said, are “here to stay.”

He added: “The companies renting both motorized and unmotorized 2-wheeled vehicles should make appropriate helmets available; failure to do so is like a car-rental company renting cars without seat belts.”