



May 25, 2020

Dear Mayor Eisenberger & Members of Hamilton City Council,

Environment Hamilton is a strong advocate for transportation options in our community that are healthy, safe, equitable, and environment and climate friendly. Our city's bike share system has evolved into precisely such a system, serving as an essential part of our local transportation network that is affordable, green, and an ideal solution as we grapple with effectively responding to the climate emergency. The system is incredibly well-used, with over 26,000 active members who have collectively taken 1.6 million rides and travelled over 2 million kilometres on SoBi bikes over the past 7 years.

As you are aware, Uber and its subsidiary Jump took over the operation of the system in April of 2018. On Friday May 15th, Uber notified City of Hamilton staff that they were terminating their contract to operate the system a year early and, further, that the service would cease to operate as of June 1st, 2020.

We are writing to inform you that, in the immediate term, we support Cycle Hamilton's call for:

1. Uber to honour their initial contract and support bike share operations until February 2021, and;
2. If needed, for the City of Hamilton to provide financial support to ensure the ongoing operations of bike share.

Over the longer term we believe the City of Hamilton must recognize the essential service that the bike share system provides to our community and to commit to ensuring that the system survives by providing financial and/or in-kind support. It is important to recognize that the system currently provides huge value for money. A useful comparison is provided by EH board member Ryan McGreal. He points out that the annual operating cost per HSR bus is \$374,000, with each bus supporting an annual average of 81,000 passenger trips, translating into a cost per passenger trip of \$4.61. By comparison, the entire annual operating cost of Hamilton Bike Share is \$600,000 which is less than the annual operating costs for two buses. The bike share system supported 350,000 passenger trips last year - more than four times as many trips as a bus - for an operating cost per passenger trip of \$1.71.

Public investment in SoBi makes sense on so many levels. It makes economic sense as the financial analysis above confirms. It makes social justice sense as bike share is a system that offers mobility justice for Hamiltonians who can't afford to move around our city in other ways. Active transportation contributes to mental well-being and ensures people get essential exercise, helping to reduce the costs to our public healthcare system. Bike share offers a safe way for our community to transition into the new normal awaits us in a post-COVID world.

Finally, it makes sense to support bike share because this active transportation system supports modal shifts away from private automobiles. Encouraging and supporting these shifts is essential for Hamilton to consider as we grapple with how to tackle the climate emergency; the fact that transportation is the only increasing source of greenhouse gas emissions in our city is not lost on us and is a good reason not to lose bike share now or in the future.

We urge you to take the necessary steps to ensure that the bike share system in Hamilton not only continues to exist, but continues to thrive and grow into the future.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cindy Gangaram". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cindy Gangaram
Chair – Environment Hamilton Board of Directors

A second handwritten signature in black ink, identical to the one above, reading "Cindy Gangaram".