

5.2 (a)(b)

A letter to Hamilton’s Mayor and Members of Committee of the Whole,

We are writing to you regarding the recent news regarding Hamilton’s bicycle share system.

Hamilton’s bicycle share system, branded as “SoBi”, is an essential part of Hamilton’s transportation infrastructure. The SoBi network meets the commuting, recreational and transit needs of people across the city by offering an affordable mode of active transportation. It contributes to a multi-modal approach to transportation by providing bikes when and where people need them and helps to address the common ‘first and last mile’ problem.

Bike share compliments the HSR by connecting Hamiltonians more directly to their desired destination, or by providing service when and where the HSR is not available. It increases utilization of the existing and expanding cycling network. Additionally, programs like the Everyone Rides Initiative which relies on SoBi, help to ensure that the benefits of SoBi are shared across our community and provide an affordable alternative to other forms of transportation for those who need it.

SoBi is a community recreational asset and should be supported by the city in the same way it supports the creation and maintenance of roadways, public parks, paths, and the escarpment stairs. For example, SoBi bikes are a key community resource for exploring the Hamilton waterfront and rail trail networks. Based on membership, we know SoBi riders live in most of Hamilton’s wards. SoBi has the added benefit of employing a fee-for-use model, which means that the cost of operation can be partially recovered.

SoBi benefits those visiting the city and contributes significantly to regional transit mobility by providing a reliable and direct connection to the GO Transit System. It serves as the primary mode of transportation for many people. The fact that SoBi network does not currently operate in all wards means it has room to grow. It does not indicate that it is not worth investing in.

A Hamilton without a bike share system will be less accessible for many citizens, will contribute less to healthy and active lifestyles that serves the City’s vision to “Be the best place to raise a child and age successfully” and will undermine our efforts to address the Climate Emergency that Hamilton Council declared. Failing to support a bike share system is contrary to the Transportation Master Plan’s goal to move people out of single occupant vehicles and into other modes of transportation. Bike share in Hamilton also aligns with more than half of City Council’s Term of Council Priorities.

Term of Council Priority	Alignment with Hamilton Bike Share
Multi-Modal Transportation	Fills the gap for the first and last mile of transportation journeys to access local and regional transit to other parts of the City and beyond.
Climate Change	Zero-carbon emitting mode of transportation.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Affordable transportation option for residents compared to other modes of transportation. Provides opportunities for those with different abilities to utilize bicycles to traverse a distance not possible by walking. Adaptive bikes give those who never thought they could ride a bike, the ability to.
Integrated Growth and Development	Provides an additional piece of transportation infrastructure to support the growing density in Hamilton and relieve congestion on existing roadways and the HSR transit system. Most cities that Hamilton competes with for employment have bicycle share systems.
Fiscal Health and Financial Management	<p>Hamilton bike share is more cost-effective transportation infrastructure estimated at less than \$2.00 operating cost per passenger trip, compared to the HSR at \$4.61. Investing in bike share is cost-effective, especially as transit continues to operate at an even higher cost with reduced service and capacity for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>Improve desirability for residents and employers which will reduce the tax burden on current payers, especially in outer wards as economic activity expands in the urban areas (City of Hamilton 2020 Budget Overview, Reassessment Tax Shifts).</p> <p>SoBi bikes and infrastructure are already owned and deployed. There are also opportunities to expand the service area and explore other funding models.</p>

For these above reasons we recommend the following:

1. The City of Hamilton fund the operations, either directly or through a third party, of the SoBi system in the event that Jump/Uber does not meet their contractual obligations.
2. In the case Jump/Uber does meet their contractual obligations, the City of Hamilton ensures the continued operations of the SoBi system beyond February 2021 through direct financial support.

The undersigned are members of the Hamilton Cycling Committee but are not writing in that capacity. We have written and signed this letter in our capacity as residents of the City of Hamilton only,

Ann McKay, Ward 1 resident
Chris Ritsma, Ward 2 resident
Christine Yachouh, Ward 2 resident
Kate Berry, Ward 2 resident
Jessica Merolli, Ward 2 resident
Cathy Sutherland Ward 3 resident
Roman Caruk, Ward 6 resident

Sharon Gibbons, Ward 6 resident
Kevin Vander Meulen, Ward 7 resident
Cora Muis, Ward 13 resident
William Oates, Ward 13 resident
Jeff Axisa, Ward 15 resident