

May 26, 2020

Dear Mayor Eisenberger and Members of Council,

Please accept this letter in support of SoBi Hamilton's bikeshare program, and in support of Council ensuring that SoBi Hamilton can continue to serve our community beyond June 1st, 2020. SoBi is a vital transportation service in Hamilton. It also will help us meet our climate change goals.

In 2019, a survey by CivicPlan showed that 40% of SoBi users use the service to commute to work, and 24% use it to run errands and attend meetings. As Hamiltonians return to work and businesses reopen, this service will likely grow in demand. For many, SoBi will provide a safe and affordable commute. For those of us working at home, this service will help us safely run errands, visit local businesses, and find a much-needed source of outdoor recreation to improve mental and physical health.

At the college, students and staff use the SoBi program to commute and visit Hamilton businesses. This takes cars off the road, reducing traffic and improving air quality. It also provides students with opportunities to learn about their city, and spend money locally.

SoBi can also help us meet our climate goals. Transportation is the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in our region, contributing to climate change. Studies of bikeshare programs, like SoBi, show that they help reduce traffic and increase the number of commuters who use alternative transportation options. In fact, 49% of SoBi members reported using their cars less often upon becoming a member.

On a personal note, in part because of the SoBi program, my family was able to give up our second car. I began biking, riding the bus and carpooling between Mohawk's Fennell Campus and my home in Dundas. Using both HSR and SoBi proved far more affordable than a second vehicle. For many Hamiltonians finding new financial pressures in the coming months, I believe SoBi will become an important affordable mobility program.

Ensuring the SoBi program's survival is a vital investment in the future of our community. It is an in demand affordable, low carbon transportation service. SoBi can be part of our response to the COVID-19 crisis, and part of our recovery and our climate-ready future.

Thank you,

Kate Flynn, Acting Director
Centre for Climate Change Management at Mohawk College

1. <https://civicplan.ca/hamiltons-sobi-delivers-on-bike-share-promises-user-survey-highlights/>