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Mayor Eisenberger and Members of Council, May 25, 2020

On behalf of McMaster University's Active Transportation Committee, I am writing to express the committee's support for the continued operation of the SoBi Hamilton bike share system. Since it started in 2015, SoBi Hamilton has provided health benefits and mobility options to the McMaster community by enabling cycling trips to and from campus, as well as across the city. The Active Transportation Committee will look into ways the university may be able to support the long term sustainability of the SoBi program.

[Research](#) conducted by McMaster's Dr. Darren Scott found that hubs located on McMaster's main campus are associated with the highest daily ridership. This indicates that the University is the most popular origin and destination in the city and that McMaster students, staff, and faculty use SoBi for commuting. Indeed, over 86,000 trips to and from the main campus have been recorded which strongly demonstrates the value of the bike share system to McMaster's community. SoBi has also introduced cycling to many who otherwise may have been prevented from cycling due to not owning a bicycle. Even for those living outside of Hamilton or the bike share service area, SoBi enables many to make short trips around campus or to the surrounding neighbourhood areas.

While bike share is valuable and important to McMaster, it undoubtedly has benefits to the broader Hamilton community. It is telling that more than 300 new members have signed up during the COVID-19 pandemic. Clearly bike share is an essential service that Hamiltonians rely on. The pandemic has led to an increase in cycling at a time when people are relying less on public transit. While Canada faces a bike shortage, the need for a bike share system is only heightened by this pandemic. The World Health Organization has expressed support for cycling to maintain physical activity and enhance mental well-being.

The SoBi program contributes immensely to the transportation needs of the McMaster community while providing health, environmental and social benefits. The financial contribution of McMaster's many users is already significant, however, with increased collaboration and partnership, particularly [amid public transit capacity restrictions](#), bike share can become an even greater component of the mode share of McMaster's community. We hope and recommend the city will ensure the continued availability of bike share not only until but beyond February 2021. Hamilton's bike share system has become essential infrastructure in the city's transportation network and is an important service available to McMaster students, faculty, and staff.

Regards, Wayne Terryberry Acting Chair - McMaster
Active Transportation Committee