

Cycling Plan and Budgetary Items

Recommendation

- 1) The Cycling Masterplan completion be expedited prioritizing gaps, schools, working trips and spots without infrastructure.
 - a. The Cycling Budget be increased to in line with per capita spending of other nearby cities to fund the expansion.

- 2) Funding for bike share be increased.
 - a. Stable operational that does not decrease if the system is more successful and funding that dynamically increases with increased services.
 - b. Stable capital funding that accounts for the age of the bikes and allows for expansion of the service area into wards beyond the currently served

- 3) Remove exemptions to parking in the bike lane, except by permit where alternative arrangements have been made, for accessibility purposes and emergency vehicles.
 - a. Increase fine for parking in bicycle lane in line with other municipalities and similar fines for blocking automobile lanes.
 - b. Hire staff or reallocate staff to enforce fining and advising individuals blocking the bike lane.

Background

WHEREAS the Cycling Budget is currently 00% of the capital budget;

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton defers multiple cycling projects every year;

WHEREAS bike share systems provide first and last mile connections to existing infrastructure like transit, better utilizing and increasing ridership on transit;

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton is attempting to encourage use of bicycles and other active transportation instead of automobile use;

WHEREAS the Bike Share network utilizes funded and currently build bicycle infrastructure;

WHEREAS bicycle lanes in Hamilton are regularly blocked;

WHEREAS infrastructure built by the city is being blocked in such a way to defeat the purpose of the built infrastructure;

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton declared a Climate Emergency;

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton declared the goal of Vision Zero;

WHEREAS the current speed of implementation of the Cycling Masterplan does not match the urgency of the above issues.

Analysis/Rationale

Cycling Masterplan and Funding:

The Cycling Masterplan was designed before the current OTM and the Complete Street Manual, and therefore the design of the masterplan is out of date. Despite this, the implementation of the masterplan leaves multiple decades until its completion.

Considering the Climate Emergency declaration and the goal of Vision Zero, the City of Hamilton has been implementing the Cycling Masterplan that does not match the urgency of these two issues, and has been deferring projects multiple years into the future.

The cycling budget being increased will allow the city to more quickly implement the cycling plans on various streets, including pilots, road diets, improved cycling infrastructure which has improved bicycle lanes that already existed.

Bike Share Funding:

Cycling infrastructure is cheaper to deliver and maintain than driving infrastructure, therefore the cost to implement and expand bike share will be offset by decreased infrastructure cost surrounding the development.

The City of Hamilton already has many kilometres of bicycle infrastructure which is not at capacity, where growth in bike ridership can occur, and bike share is a well used mode in the city that can continue to grow.

Bike share has a much lower per rider subsidy than transit, so encouraging bicycle use instead of bringing transit to capacity is far cheaper than expanding transit service where bicycle ridership could take some of the load.

Bike share is a part of Hamilton's brand and image, and improving the service will bring economic benefits to the city in a natural and citizen led way, in addition to the existing and continuing work of other departments.

Increasing the number of cyclists can increase safety, through the doctrine of “safety in numbers” ridership hits a critical mass where motorists and other transportation expects cyclists and improves awareness of them.

Blocking Bicycle Lane:

Parking in the bicycle lane is a common issue in Hamilton that is reported by many cyclists to the city and seen posted regularly on social media channels. Hamilton currently allows parking in bicycle lane in many instances, and the cost to apply for a permit compared to the fine for blocking the bicycle lane does not encourage individuals to seek a legal means of blocking the bicycle lane which often provides safe alternatives for cyclists. Additionally, enforcement is minimal, meaning that there is very little reason to avoid blocking the bike lanes in Hamilton.

This is critical infrastructure that is built to keep cyclists and pedestrians safer, and in many circumstances having no alternative can be more dangerous, such as forcing cyclists to bicycle the wrong way on a one-way street or requiring them to dismount and cross where there is no signalized crossing.