

Dear Chair and Members of the General Issues Committee,

Bike share is good for cities. It provides affordable, sustainable, and healthy transportation, and boosts local economies.

Hamilton is one of the over 2000 cities globally with bike share. Residents can ride one of their 1000 blue SoBi bikes found across their 150 hubs.

For riders, it is affordable, convenient, sustainable—and great exercise. Since launching, SoBi riders have burned 161 million calories, and saved \$2.3 million collectively. Even if you do not use it, bike share increases urban liveability by reducing congestion, pollution, emissions, and noise through reduced car use. In Hamilton, 20% of users would drive if SoBi wasn't available, eliminating over 114,000 car trips and 39,838 kg of emissions.

Bike share also strengthens the local economy. Riders save money—just 15¢ per minute or \$20/month, far cheaper than driving and even transit. The Everyone Rides Initiative ensures equitable access, offering passes for as little as \$15 per year for those in financial need. More bikes mean more business: in D.C., 23% of bike share users spent more at local shops, and 70% of businesses saw a positive impact. This trend is expected in Hamilton as well, as tens of thousands of SoBi trips take place in the city's business districts: with 37,498 trips on James Street North, 22,322 in the Westdale Village BIA, and 9,472 in the International Village BIA in 2024.

Bike share also saves cities money. New York's system saves between \$18.8-\$28.3 million in healthcare costs annually, while Dublin's bike share shows a 6.4:1 return on investment (12.3:1 if wider economic benefits, such as productivity gains and labour force participation, are included). A Hamilton study is in the works, but preliminary calculations already show clear benefits.

Of course, bike share installation and maintenance costs money. Hamilton's contribution is on par - and often lower - than municipal contributions in other cities. These investments also pale when compared to the money needed to provide the infrastructure required for driving.

And these investments are working. Ridership is growing—from 300,000 rides in 2023 to nearly 500,000 in 2024.

Hamilton's bike share is working. The benefits are clear. Council should keep it rolling.

Sincerely,
Dr. Léa Ravensbergen

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