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April 1, 2021

**RE: PA22.12 Improving Toronto's Bike Share Program: Increasing Access and Equity of Bike ShareToronto**

Bike Share Toronto is an incredible public service that has grown in popularity with every year. New stations have expanded the reach of the system and we are thrilled to have Bike Share stations in more parts of the city than ever! Yet, not everyone in Toronto can access Bike Share due to reasons such as cost, location, and trip length. Therefore, we are writing to members of the Toronto Parking Authority Board to request the following three changes to improve equitable access to Bike Share Toronto:

1. Introduce a low-income pass
2. Expand Bike Share across the city, especially within the inner suburbs
3. Increase the ride duration from 30 minutes to allow for longer trips

**1. Introduce a Low-Income Pass**

In May 2020, City Council passed the ActiveTO acceleration of the Cycling Network Plan including a motion calling for "Bikes for All", which showed City Council's interest in pursuing cycling as a transportation mode for low-income residents.<sup>1</sup> In September 2020, City Council directed Bike Share to report back on the three items in this letter: a low-income pass, expansion of Bike Share, and the potential for an increase in the trip length.<sup>2</sup>

We urge the City of Toronto to develop a program to introduce a low-income, easy-to-access pass for Bike Share bikes in Toronto. The introduction of this pass will help unlock this public asset for the most underserved communities for whom the upfront and ongoing costs of bicycle ownership or a traditional Bike Share membership may be inaccessible.

Low-income residents may be unable to afford the cost of both an annual Bike Share membership and a monthly TTC pass, for example, though both systems could greatly enhance one another's service. Mobility as a Service (MaaS) envisions a more integrated service delivery model for a range of public and active transportation modes. Making it easier to pick and choose between transportation modes can make multi-modal travel possible and more efficient, since

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<sup>1</sup> "[CC21.20 Cycling Network Plan Installations: Bloor West Bikeway Extension & ActiveTO Projects](#)," *City of Toronto*, May 28, 2020, accessed March 30, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> "[JE15.9 Improving Toronto's Bike Share Program](#)," *City of Toronto*, September 30, 2020, accessed March 30, 2021.

customers won't need to pay more than one fare for one journey.<sup>3</sup> The current fare structure is particularly challenging for low-income residents, who may be unable to pay for a regional bus or train and then switch to another service. The TTC plans to implement a MaaS strategy in their five-year plan, which is intended to run from 2020 to 2022.<sup>4</sup> A robust MaaS strategy could offer solutions for low-income residents, such as by expanding reduced fare options across systems and in a way that was integrated.

All residents across the city deserve to have access to affordable, physically distant, and healthy ways of getting around. Hamilton's Everyone Rides Initiative, for example, has been recognised as an award-winning equity initiative that includes a bike share basics intro that can be used as a blueprint for success for subsidised memberships.<sup>5</sup> The City of Toronto's 'Welcome Policy' could provide an opportunity to pilot a low-income Bike Share pass.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the City of Toronto's 'Fair Pass' program could be used to pilot a low-income Bike Share program.<sup>7</sup> Neighbourhood-based places, such as libraries and community centres, could be well-positioned to deliver such services. Demand for bicycles as a result of the pandemic has skyrocketed, making affordable bicycles and parts to repair bicycles scarce.<sup>8</sup> It is no surprise that, according to the report to the TPA, Bike Share use similarly increased, as cycling for commuting, recreation, and exercise continues in 2021 from 2020.

## **2. Expand Bike Share in Scarborough, Etobicoke, North York, and across the city**

We have been encouraged by the introduction of new Bike Share stations across the city, including some in Scarborough, Etobicoke, and North York, and we look forward to the future expansion of more stations, including in Thorncliffe and Flemingdon Park. New Bike Share Stations give commuters more mobility options to make local trips such as running errands, visit local businesses, and make multi-modal trips, such as by combining cycling with transit. We would be pleased to provide feedback on future stations locations that could serve the needs of local communities.

The rollout of electric bikes on the Bike Share system has been an incredible success: bicycles have been consistently booked since their launch. A successful expansion in the suburbs should include access to electric bikes to help overcome the greater geographic distances, make transportation of goods and groceries easier, and help users operate safely in mixed traffic where bike lanes are less prevalent. Including electric bicycles in an expansion in the

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<sup>3</sup> Warwick Goodall, Tiffany Dovey Fishman, Justine Bornstein, and Brett Bonthron, "[The Rise of Mobility as a Service](#)," *Deloitte Review*, Issue 20, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Toronto Transit Commission, "[5-Year Service Plan & 10-Year Outlook: Next Stop, Even Better. 2020-2024 & beyond](#)," 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Everyone Rides "provides subsidized memberships to individuals who identify that they are in financial need of one." The program seeks to make Bike Share more equitable by improving bicycle access, subsidizing the cost of membership, providing educational resources, and conducting outreach. [Everyone Rides](#).

<sup>6</sup> City of Toronto, "[Help with the Cost of Relocation](#)."

<sup>7</sup> City of Toronto, "[Fair Pass Transit Discount Program](#)."

<sup>8</sup> Kerrisa Wilson, "['We have no bicycles.' Toronto bike shop says as heightened demand continues in COVID-19 pandemic](#)," *CP24*, March 27, 2021, accessed March 30, 2021.

suburbs could help make cycling more appealing to people who don't consider themselves to be 'cyclists.'<sup>9</sup>

### **3. Increase the ride duration from 30 minutes to allow for longer trips**

The current 30-minute time limit for Bike Share trips may be adequate in downtown Toronto; however, increasing the time limit to 45 minutes could help make Bike Share a strong commuting option for residents outside of the core. Increasing the ride duration time would allow for longer trips within neighbourhoods and for easier access to local businesses and key destinations outside of neighbourhoods, both of which tend to be longer in Scarborough, Etobicoke, and North York. Moreover, the suburban expansion of the Bike Share program can help more people get around in a sustainable way. Bike Share is an important low-carbon mobility solution, aligned with the City of Toronto's TransformTO climate goals and can help begin to address the higher levels of pollution seen in lower-income neighbourhoods in Toronto.<sup>10</sup>

Although current data shows that 97% of trips made are under 30 minutes, this is unsurprising given that overage fees are charged at a rate of \$4 for every additional 30 minutes.<sup>11</sup> As casual riders decrease and annual members increase, trips longer than 30 minutes are likely to decrease as users will become more accustomed to Bike Share's pricing model and as few will wish to incur the overage fees. Further analysis may be required to identify the number of Bike Share users who make longer trips, but stop midway through to dock and take out a new bicycle.

### **Conclusion**

We urge the City of Toronto to undertake this work to expand the Bike Share project to serve a wider proportion of the city's population.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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<sup>9</sup> Jessica E. Bourne, Ashley R. Cooper, Paul Kelly, Fiona J. Kinnear, Clare England, Sam Leary, Angie Page, "[The Impact of E-Cycling on Travel Behaviour: A Scoping Review](#)," *Journal of Transport & Health*, Volume 19, 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Luckrezia Awuor, Stephanie Melles, "[The influence of environmental and health indicators on premature mortality: An empirical analysis of the City of Toronto's 140 neighborhoods](#)," *Health & Place* (58) 2019,

<sup>11</sup> "[Pricing](#)," *Bike Share Toronto*, accessed March 31, 2021.



880 Cities



Agincourt Village Community Association



Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services



Canada Africa Partnership Network



Charlie's FreeWheels



Cycle Toronto



David Suzuki Foundation



Our Greenway Conservancy



pointA



Scarborough Business Association



Toronto Environmental Alliance

Woburn Local Planning Table

Women's Cycling Network