



advocacy@ffsafestreets.ca

March 17, 2023
Toronto City Hall
Infrastructure and Environment Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: IE2.6 Modernizing Bike Share Toronto Rate Structure

We are writing today to **applaud the enactment of a low-income Bike Share pass, and request that the proposed \$0.10 per minute fee for e-bikes in the Bike Share program be revised and eliminated.** It is in the city's best interest, in every possible way, to incentivize residents to travel by modes other than cars, and instituting a higher fee on an appealing solution to car dependence is counterproductive.

Fewer people driving makes our streets safer and ultimately saves lives. We saw incontrovertible evidence of this when rates of road violence plummeted along with rates of driving during the pandemic, and then rose again in lockstep with the increase in driving after pandemic measures were lifted. Doing everything possible to help people use a mode of transportation other than cars is extremely important in light of the glacially slow progress made to date with our Vision Zero program and the lack of political will to make swift, bold changes to our most deadly arterial roads, especially in our outer suburbs. E-bikes could be a solution for people who would otherwise drive their car from the suburbs to downtown, a distance that some consider too far to ride a regular bike.

If the drivers who killed our loved ones had been riding an e-bike instead of driving a car, our loved ones would still be alive today. Either the crashes would totally have been averted because the sightlines on a bike are unobstructed and bikes are more nimble to operate than cars, or the crash would have been survivable due to the lower kinetic force inflicted by a light vehicle at a lower speed. The same applies to survivors like me: if the drivers who struck us, leaving us with life-ruining injuries, had been riding an e-bike instead of driving a car, our trauma could have been averted or significantly reduced.

A trip from the suburbs involving an e-bike and a TTC fare would be at least as expensive as driving a car and paying for parking. **Putting this financial barrier in the way of active transportation, when alternative streams of revenue are possible, is irresponsible and counterproductive.**

Beyond the core issue of road safety, fewer people driving means less expensive wear-and-tear on our crumbling roads, it means fewer climate emissions, and it means making progress toward the goal of moving 75% of short trips to active transportation rather than driving. It also means residents saving money on commuting - owning, operating, maintaining and insuring an automobile consumes a large percentage of income which could otherwise be better spent enriching residents' lives.

Bike Share as a part of our transportation system should receive equitable investment compared to the investment car infrastructure receives. If more resources are needed, perhaps it is time to make some bold changes to revenue from parking, rather than charging e-bike users who are more likely to be low-income or otherwise vulnerable. For example, it makes no sense that a parking ticket for evading a parking fee of \$3-4/hr is \$30, while a ticket for evading a \$3.25 TTC fare is \$425. If parking tickets were on par with the punishment for evading paying \$3.25, then much greater investments could be made into Bike Share and supporting active transportation.

Further, the charge for on-street permit parking is far too low considering the value of the public roadway it consumes. If an on-street parking spot were billed at the same rate per square metre as the average home in Toronto was for property tax in 2022, it would cost at least \$59 per month, at a minimum, but instead is only being billed at \$17.70. This is yet another way Toronto is subsidising car drivers at the cost of other road users. Rectifying undervalued rates for on-street permit parking is another parking revenue stream that the city should take advantage of.

To truly modernize the Bike Share rate structure in line with Vision Zero and climate goals, it should be free, or as close as possible. It would be far more fair to raise revenues from car parking than it is to place a significant financial barrier in the way that disincentivizes residents from using Bike Share e-bikes. Everyone benefits when fewer people drive cars. **It saves lives when fewer people drive cars.** We love the Bike Share program, and are very pleased with its expansion. **We hope that alternative revenue solutions can be found to keep Bike Share e-bike access equitable for everyone, and even to accelerate the electrification of Bike Share stations across to support e-bike charging and improve e-bike access even more.**

Sincerely,



Jessica Spieker, Spokesperson
Friends and Families for Safe Streets