



Friday, March 17, 2023

Infrastructure & Environment Committee
c/o Matthew Green
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Submitted by e-mail to iec@toronto.ca

Dear Deputy Mayor McKelvie & Members of the Infrastructure & Environment Committee:

RE: IE2.6 (Modernizing Bike Share Toronto Rate Structure)

The Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition was established after the outset of the pandemic in 2020 to advocate for new bikeways to mirror transit for the benefit of essential workers and transit-reliant residents. Our work has transitioned to a focus on holding City Hall to account for its cycling, road safety, and climate goals. Expanding Bike Share Toronto – which the Toronto Parking Authority has an ambitious plan to do over the next few years – will help contribute to meeting the TransformTO goal of net zero emissions by 2040. However, we have some concerns regarding the proposed rate structure.

We support the proposed changes to the annual Bike Share Toronto memberships which will see modest price increases to \$105 for unlimited 30-minute rides and \$120 for unlimited 45-minute rides for the regular (a.k.a. Iconic) bikes. We also support the replacing of the \$4 per 30-minute overage charge with a 12¢ per minute charge which will help reduce the amount of overage charges users have to pay. Especially for those who go slightly over the 30 or 45 minutes their membership offers them. We also support the idea of a \$5 annual pass for low-income residents to improve transportation equity outcomes.

However, we have serious concerns with the proposed changes for the short term passes and single ride pricing. We understand that the 72-hour pass would be scrapped while the cost of the 24-hour pass would more than double to \$15, while allowing for rides up to 90 minutes and overage charges of 12¢ per minute. This change is unacceptable and does not address the need for a pricing tier in between a short-term pass and an annual membership. We strongly recommend that Bike Share Toronto revert to the previous \$7 fee for the 24-hour pass – with the possibility of increasing it to \$8 to account for inflation. As an alternative to the 72-hour pass, we request that the Toronto Parking Authority investigate implementing a monthly pass which BIXI Montréal charges \$20 for.

With respect to the single ride cost, we noticed a 30-minute ride would end up costing \$4.60 under the new structure which is 42% more expensive than the current \$3.25 rate! To bring the single ride price closer to the current price, we recommend that the \$1.00 undocking fee include ten minutes and then keep the existing 12¢ per minute charge. This would bring the 30-minute ride cost down to \$3.40. Even if only five minutes were to be included, the cost of \$4.00 for 30 minutes – a 23% price hike – would be far more reasonable than the current proposal.

Perhaps the most controversial change involves a new surcharge for e-bikes which would be 10¢ per minute for an annual membership or 20¢ per minute for a single ride (instead of 12¢ for the Iconic bikes). We recognize the fact that e-bikes cost more to purchase and maintain, while other bike share systems such as BIXI Montréal and Mobi in Vancouver charge e-bike premiums that are higher than what Bike Share Toronto is proposing. While the proposed changes may appear to be acceptable, some additional actions need to be taken to help improve transportation equity.

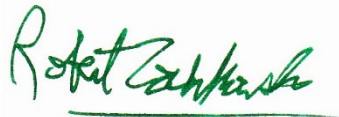
1. Those who qualify for the \$5 annual low-income pass should have the e-bike surcharge reduced (or even waived) to help such users who live in the suburbs and need to travel longer distances.
2. To make annual memberships more attainable to those who may not qualify for the low-income pass, Bike Share Toronto could allow annual memberships to be paid monthly (e.g. \$8.75/month for 30 minutes or \$10.00/month for 45 minutes) which Vélib in Paris does.
3. Bike Share Toronto could introduce a higher tier membership which can include e-bike usage. Vélib's V-Max membership costs €100 per year and includes two 45-minute e-bike trips per day.
4. Given GO Transit can set a maximum rate charged per month after a certain number of trips paid by PRESTO Card, Bike Share Toronto could also look into setting monthly charge caps.
5. To allow for increased use of e-bikes in the system, Bike Share Toronto could look into incentivizing users to dock e-bikes at stations with e-bike charging, as well as increase the number of stations that include e-bike charging.

Last, but not least, we feel data collection could be improved to identify the true level of e-bike usage by food delivery workers to confirm whether the claims of them responsible for “e-bike hogging” are true. We heard from groups such as Gig Workers United which have some workers who are unable to pay for an annual membership up front and end up paying more for single rides. By allowing for such workers to pay monthly for annual memberships – as well as looking at membership options that include e-bike usage and/or setting monthly charge caps – we feel Bike Share Toronto can become a pioneer in improving transportation equity for food delivery workers and other Torontonians.

We reaffirm our support for the proposed annual membership changes but urge that Bike Share Toronto reconsider their plans for the short-term pass and single ride pricing which will make bike share users worse off than today. We also call on Bike Share Toronto to investigate additional measures to reduce the impacts the new e-bike surcharge will have despite the proposed costs being less than in Montréal and Vancouver.

We thank you for taking these comments into consideration and please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,



Robert Zaichkowski
Community Bikeways (TCBC)