

Members' Perceptions of Cycle Hamilton and the beneficial role of non-profit advocacy and community engagement

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Abstract

Cycling is considered an active, sustainable mode of transportation. Community groups play a role in promoting and advocating for cycling practices throughout cities. As a non-profit organization, Cycle Hamilton aims to make the city of Hamilton the best place to get around by bike. Following the recent COVID-19 pandemic and a reduction in their regular operations, Cycle Hamilton's Board of Directors solicited the support of McMaster University's sustainability student researchers to learn about members' perceptions of the greatest impact that is or could be provided by Cycle Hamilton. As the student researchers who took on this project, we interviewed 20 participants and analyzed interview transcripts using thematic analysis. Results identified two overarching themes describing how members feel that Cycle Hamilton can have the greatest impact: 1) leading individual and structural advocacy efforts and campaigns; and 2) engaging in events and community collaborations. These findings offer Cycle Hamilton and other cycling non-profit organizations insights into the impact of their work and suggest possible actions to best support the cycling experience in their cities.

Introduction

There are many ways to travel; cycling is one of the most sustainable. It has numerous environmental, human health, and economic benefits. The environmental benefits include lower greenhouse gas emissions. For example, Dutch people saved 1.41 million tonnes of CO₂ each year through cycling in a five-year period (*Cycling, the Better Mode of Transport*, 2019). As an active form of transportation, cycling has physical health benefits, including reduced cancer and cardiovascular risk (Oja, 2011). Mental health benefits have also been observed, which include improved cognitive functioning and reduced anxiety and depression (Pucher, 2012). Economically, cycling creates more local jobs and jobs in areas of bicycle retail, manufacturing, wholesale, infrastructure, tourism, and services (Blondiau, 2016). Cyclists also support local economies because they shop more frequently compared to their automobile counterparts (Clifton et al., 2012). Individually, cycling provides an affordable mode of transport, reducing costs related to fuel, insurance, and other expenses. In addition to the stated environmental, human health, and economic benefits of cycling, there is a societal need to move people more efficiently as the population and number of commuters grow, and cycling is an efficient option (Government of Canada, 2019). For example, 12 bicycles take the same amount of road space as one car (Bruntlett, 2018), and cycling can reduce travel time for trips up to five kilometers when compared to cars in urban cities (Aalgaard, 2018).

According to the 2016 Canadian Census, the City of Hamilton had the highest proportion of commuters using sustainable transportation, defined as public or active modes of transportation, (27.8%) and highest use of public transit (9.8%), of cities in southern Ontario's Greater Golden Horseshoe (Government of Canada, 2017). Specifically, 0.9% of Hamiltonians were found to use cycling as their main mode of transportation in 2016 (Government of Canada, 2017). To support and encourage active transportation, the City of Hamilton has a Cycling Master Plan (CMP) consisting of an annual budget for building cycling infrastructure and a goal of seeing 15% of all trips made by walking and cycling (City of Hamilton, 2018). The City also supports various cycling activities and initiatives including Hamilton Bike Share, a cycling sharing system, city-wide cycling events, and community advocacy groups.

Cycle Hamilton, a non-profit organization, is one of several cycling advocacy groups in Hamilton. Starting in 2015, their aim has been to make Hamilton the best place for anyone to get around by bike and connect with the community (*Cycle Hamilton*, n.d.). Cycle Hamilton's operations consists of three subcommittees: advocacy, membership, and communication. The advocacy subcommittee works to inspire change regarding various cycling issues in Hamilton. The membership subcommittee works to increase the number of individuals supporting Cycle Hamilton. There are three levels of membership including paid and non-paid levels. Finally, the communication subcommittee works to share cycling news and promote events. Events have included hosting group rides, informational sessions, and bike-in movie nights.

The work of Cycle Hamilton is ongoing because although 46% of the City of Hamilton's CMP is completed, people who cycle still report that the design of infrastructure does not fully meet their needs and preferences (Desjardins, 2020). At the center of Cycle Hamilton's work is their members, who are crucial to the operation and mission of Cycle Hamilton. However, like several other organizations, COVID-19 reduced activities and operations of Cycle Hamilton. With an opportunity to make changes, Cycle Hamilton was interested to learn how they could best support Hamiltonians and their current cycling needs. Building on Cycle Hamilton's advocacy plan for 2021 – 2024 (Stuckless, 2021), the aim of this study is to understand members' perceptions of what is and could be provided by Cycle Hamilton. After outlining our methods for conducting semi-structured qualitative interviews and decisions made for thematic analysis, overarching themes were identified from the data. The results are followed with a discussion and recommendations for future practices for Cycle Hamilton.

Methods

In alignment with project goals, a qualitative research study was conducted to better understand members' perceptions of Cycle Hamilton. This study received approval from McMaster's Research Ethics Board (REB# 6100).

Recruitment

Our recruitment and data collection took place at Cycle Hamilton's Annual General Meeting (AGM), which took place on November 22, 2022, from 6:00-7:30 PM. For this study, our group worked in collaboration with two other student groups as part of their experiential learning project for the course "SUSTAIN 3S03: Implementing Sustainable Change" that took place from September to December 2022. Of the two student groups from SUSTAIN 3S03, one group was responsible for communicating about the AGM and the other was responsible for facilitating the AGM (MacAskill *et al.*, 2022). Initially, a recruitment advertisement, including the project overview and link to the Letter of Information (**see Letter of Information in Appendix B**), was sent to the SUSTAIN 3S03 communications team (Al-Humuza *et al.*, 2022) (**see recruitment advertisement in Appendix A**). The initial recruitment was followed with in-person recruitment during the AGM. In our group of five student researchers, one researcher was responsible for recruiting potential participants throughout the event and pairing interested participants with another student researcher, who was equipped with a recorder and the interview guide (**see**

Interview Guide in Appendix D). Enrolled participants were assigned a unique ID number and received a ten-dollar Starbucks gift card at the start of the interview. Completed interviews were transferred as an audio file to McMaster's secure OneDrive and then deleted from the recording device.

Informed Consent

All participants consented to the study's conditions as outlined in the Oral Consent Script (**see Oral Consent Script in Appendix C**). Permission was obtained for all quotes included in this report as mentioned in the Oral Consent Script. Additionally, participants were made aware of the potential study risks and were not obliged to participate if they felt uncomfortable (**see Oral Consent Script in Appendix C**). All participants agreed to have their interviews recorded and transcribed, with transcripts saved on McMaster University's secure OneDrive. Data was only made accessible to members of the research team and all transcripts and related emails were deleted from the OneDrive as soon as all interviews were transcribed.

Data Collection

Data was collected from 20 individuals participating in one-on-one, semi-structured interviews, which ranged from five to ten minutes in duration. During the interviews, all participants were asked about their experience with Cycle Hamilton, their cycling experience in the city of Hamilton, and any suggestions they may have for the organization to assist them in making Hamilton best place for anyone to get around by bike (**see Interview Guide in Appendix D**). Completed interviews were transferred onto the OneDrive, transcribed, and edited to better describe the conversation style and the participants' emotions, thus improving the quality of the thematic analysis process.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. As student researchers, we leveraged the principles outlined in Braun and Clarke to make several decisions prior to beginning our thematic analysis, which took place from late November 2022 to early January 2023. We outline our decisions as follows:

What counts as a theme?

A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Topics or ideas were considered sub-themes of an overall theme if they were present in five or more of the 20 interviews. To identify themes and draw conclusions, we familiarized ourselves with our data, generated initial codes, searched for themes, reviewed themes, defined and named themes, and then ultimately outlined our findings in this report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

A rich description of the data set, or detailed account of one particular aspect

A rich description of the data set was chosen instead of a detailed account of one aspect because of the lack of prior research in our research topic. Braun and Clarke (2006) define that providing a rich description of the dataset is appropriate for an under-research area, working with participants whose views are unknown, and when a study showcases prominent or important themes.

Inductive or theoretical thematic analysis

An inductive approach was chosen instead of a theoretic, or deductive, approach because we wanted to understand various perceptions based on the data without preexisting notions or theories as would be in a deductive approach. An inductive approach means the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Semantic or latent themes

A semantic approach identifies themes from the explicit or surface meanings of the data compared to latent themes, which go beyond what a participant has said or what has been written. We chose semantic themes based on what was explicitly said by participants because we wanted to identify clear insights and recommendations for Cycle Hamilton, rather than trying to identify underlying assumptions and ideologies of what participants said.

Epistemology: essentialist/realist vs. constructionist thematic analysis

An essentialist/realist approach was utilized as the language, experience, and meanings behind what participants said were considered straightforward in order to remain true to the data. There was no deeper meaning considered from the data, which would have been required if using a constructionist approach. (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

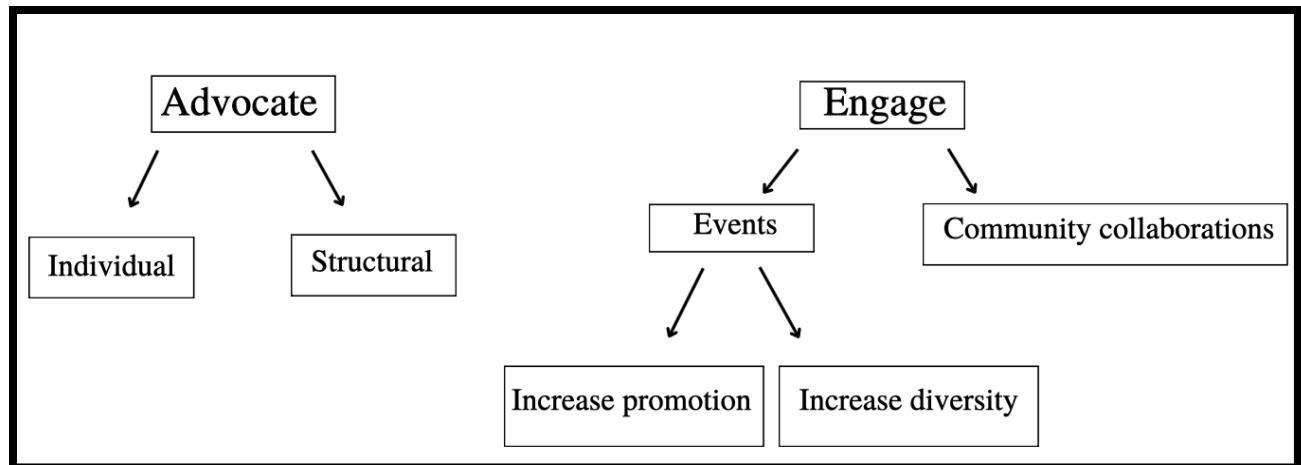
At the beginning of our thematic analysis, ideas were summarized based on the language of participants at face value. The coding process then involved reviewing all the transcribed interviews and colour coding commonalities within the data set. Through discussion and analysis, we developed a thematic map, which accurately reflected the language used by our participants.

Results

Our thematic analysis identified two main themes centered on how Cycle Hamilton can better serve its members by: 1) advocating and 2) engaging. More specifically, Cycle Hamilton can advocate on an individual and structural level. Cycle Hamilton can also engage community members through events, focusing specifically on increased promotion and diversity of audience members, and community collaborations. Our thematic map (Figure 1) and examples of quotes are seen below.

Figure 1

Thematic map of how Cycle Hamilton can better serve its members.



Theme 1: Cycle Hamilton can better serve its members through advocacy.

This first theme describes two forms of advocacy that Cycle Hamilton can participate in. For this study, we define advocacy as “the work, through vocal support and promotion, of bringing about a change to some condition with, or on behalf of, an individual, family, group, or community” (Rempel, 2017). Advocacy can occur at the individual, cultural, or structural level.

Subtheme 1.1: Cycle Hamilton can better serve its members through individual advocacy.

Advocating at the individual level refers to targeting a change in individual thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and actions (Precious, 2022). Participants expressed a desire for Cycle Hamilton to advocate for cycling to individuals who may not be familiar with cycling. For example, increased cycling education programs and targeting individuals at a younger age. This sub-theme was referenced seven times in five out of the 20 interviews.

One participant describes that if Hamiltonians can start cycling actively at a younger age, they are more likely to continue as they age: “*University students, high school students ... if you kind of reinforce certain behaviors such as cycling in those ages, they’re more likely to continue those behaviors as they enter adulthood and the regular working life.*”

Subtheme 1.2: Cycle Hamilton can better serve its members through structural advocacy.

Advocating at the structural level refers to targeting laws and policies that are a part of institutions (Precious, 2022). Participants expressed a desire for Cycle Hamilton to advocate for better infrastructure and safety for community members by working with government bodies. Examples of infrastructure include the implementation of cycling lanes, bike valets, and cycling storage facilities. This sub-theme was referenced ten times in five out of the 20 interviews.

One participant describes their value of safety as well as increased infrastructure for cycling: “*...push sort of governing bodies to increase cycling, not just sort of adding cycling lanes but to also increase protection on existing [cycling] infrastructure as well.*”

Theme 2: Cycle Hamilton can better serve its members through increased engagements.

This second theme of engagement refers to how Cycle Hamilton connects with its members and includes two sub themes of 1) events and 2) community collaborations. Furthermore, the subtheme of engaging through events includes two more subthemes of increasing 1) event promotion and 2) diversity of attendees at events.

Subtheme 2.1: Cycle Hamilton can engage its members through events.

Participants expressed a desire for Cycle Hamilton to continue engaging with community members through various events to help build a sense of community.

Subtheme 2.1.1: Cycle Hamilton can engage its members through events by increasing event promotion.

Participants expressed their desire to see more promotions from Cycle Hamilton to increase awareness of the events and initiatives that are occurring. They suggested that improved communication surrounding events can potentially increase participation and engagement in events. This subtheme was referenced ten times in five out of the 20 interviews.

One participant expressed their desire for concise and direct information about events from Cycle Hamilton: *“let people know that this is what's happening, and this is where the meeting is, and they are welcome to come... Even if it's, uh, two sentences once a week, just to keep us on the thing [Instagram and Newsletter], you know?”*

Subtheme 2.1.2: Cycle Hamilton can engage its members through events by increasing diversity of attendees.

Participants expressed a desire for Cycle Hamilton to increase the diversity of attendees at their events. This includes diversity of demographics, geographical location, and cycling experiences. This subtheme was referenced seven times in five out of 20 interviews.

One participant voiced their recommendation of engaging members from different communities: *“...running events that sort of yeah, draw out members from communities, especially members from communities that aren't regular cyclists and sort of introducing them to what already exists and what could exist...building sort of a bigger organization that is diverse and that people can use and want to use and sort of yeah, getting more and more places involved in the process.”*

Subtheme 2.2: Cycle Hamilton can engage its members through community collaborations.

Participants expressed their desire for Cycle Hamilton to engage with other community groups, both cycling-focused and non-cycling based. Community collaborations were described in terms of organizing or supporting new or existing events. This subtheme was referenced eight times in six out of the 20 interviews.

One participant describes specific groups or organizations with whom Cycle Hamilton could collaborate. One participant described how Cycle Hamilton should expand their messaging to amplify existing work of cycling groups, but also support non-cycling groups: *“...working more broadly with different groups in the city, who may not have cycling as their mandate but may*

actually support cycling based on a shared mandate.... working with Everyone Rides Initiative and the [Hamilton] Bike Share program.”

Discussion

This section briefly discusses our findings from the interviews, specifically in relation to ‘advocacy’, ‘engagements’, and opportunities for community collaborations, which look to expand Cycle Hamilton’s members’ experience with the organization.

Advocacy through campaigns

Results from the theme of ‘advocacy’, specifically on an individual and structural level, relate to current research and suggest alternative approaches for Cycle Hamilton to conduct their advocacy work. Subtheme 1.1 on individual advocacy suggests advocating for cycling in younger demographics that lack knowledge on its benefits and applications. This aligns with research published in *Preventative Medicine Reports*, which indicates that children who walk or bike to school at a young age are more likely to continue doing so as they grow into adulthood (DeWeese et al., 2022). The act of reinforcing habits early on will help sustain these healthy behaviors into adulthood. Subtheme 1.2 on structural advocacy highlights collaborating with governing bodies to advocate for better bike lanes and safer infrastructure. This suggestion connects well with previous findings from Cycle Hamilton’s 2021-2024 advocacy plan, which seeks to articulate a proactive framework that will guide Cycle Hamilton’s efforts over the next three years. Specifically, the advocacy plan includes a need to “articulate change” by connecting with City officials.

Results suggest that Cycle Hamilton requires greater public communication on their advocacy efforts, not more advocacy work. This is because Cycle Hamilton’s advocacy subcommittee has conducted various advocacy projects in the past and has current projects underway that may not be public information. Therefore, it may be beneficial for Cycle Hamilton to consider different communications methods or different approaches of advocacy. One approach could be to update the ‘Advocacy’ section of Cycle Hamilton’s website to include recent updates and current projects in addition to completed projects (*Cycle Hamilton*. (n.d.)). For example, organizations like Environment Hamilton include petition links under their website’s ‘Advocacy’ section that users can share to platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or email (Environment Hamilton, n.d.). Including this type of information can increase website viewership while keeping them up to date. Another approach to increase awareness surrounding their advocacy work could be focusing their advocacy and resources on specific streets or intersections of Hamilton. In the past, campaigns such as “Yes We Cannon” successfully rallied thousands of Hamiltonians to support the installation of bidirectional bike lanes in Hamilton’s central east-west corridor (McGreal, 2013). Although narrowing the scope of advocacy comes at the expense of exhausting time and energy, campaigning is an effective way to embrace ambiguity and empathize with different perspectives within the same community (Green, 2019). Additionally, making deep connections with community members and involving them directly can help reignite passion and energy into a specific cause (Green, 2019). Campaigns could provide an opportunity for Cycle

Hamilton to both raise awareness about their advocacy work and inspire a sense of community, which could translate to increased membership and participation in future events.

Increased consistency and frequency of smaller scale events

Results from the theme of ‘engagements’ to be conducted by Cycle Hamilton identifies events and community collaborations as examples, subtheme 2.1 and 2.2 respectively. While analyzing the results further, it becomes evident that within the subtheme of events, participants highlighted two more subthemes focusing on ‘increasing event promotions’ and ‘increasing diversity of attendees.’

Compared to previous research conducted, one of the recommendations that Cycle Hamilton’s advocacy plan addresses is to “do fun things” (p.10). Specifically, member feedback encouraged Cycle Hamilton to partner with community organizations in hosting pop-up events like bike cafes. This recommendation aligns with subtheme 2.2 as there was a desire to amplify Cycle Hamilton’s networking efforts by collaborating with external community organizations/partners.

However, results suggest that the consistency, frequency, and size of event is valued more compared to other factors because Cycle Hamilton has facilitated many events. Most recently, events include “Bike-In Movie” on June 4th, 2022, the “AGM & Cycle Social” on November 22nd, 2022, and the “Winter Bike Day” on February 10th, 2023 (Cycle Hamilton, n.d.). However, relative to other cycling non-profit organizations, such as Cycle Toronto, who have been conducting at least one event or community engagement every month, it becomes apparent that Cycle Hamilton lacks in frequency and consistency regarding their events and their promotions relative to Cycle Toronto. Looking at the success of Cycle Toronto’s engagements, it suggests that Cycle Hamilton does not necessarily need large scale events to satisfy members desires. Smaller events such as workshops or “Coldest Day of the Year Ride” (Cycle Toronto, n.d.), something that is specific to a day of the year, could generate more participation if done at a higher frequency.

Intentional communication strategies

Furthermore, these solutions only remain possible if the organization can communicate and effectively promote these events to its members. In the past, Cycle Hamilton has promoted their events via their social media accounts, such as Instagram. Therefore, Cycle Hamilton may want to consider alternative communication strategies and methods to engage different audiences. First, the type of communication channel should be considered. For example, Instagram and Twitter are known to have a younger audience, while a newsletter or broadcast text messages could be ideal for older adult members, or members without social media. Likewise, diversifying the communication of the organization to non-cycling members at different community locations can also lead to a greater diversity in event attendees to include non-members and non-cyclists.

Second, the communication strategy for events should be considered. In the year 2022, Cycle Hamilton dedicated 15 Instagram/Facebook posts throughout the course of the year advertising their events, with eight of the 15 posts being dedicated to the AGM. There is an opportunity to here to leverage social media and have this similar promotion schedule for other events such as Cycle Towards Action, which received one post prior to the event. The Cycle Towards Action post and the Movie Night posts were being promoted in conjunction due to the events taking

place soon after one another. Scheduling events so that they are spread out and having a specific promotion plan for each event can provide more focused attention towards each event.

Leveraging current relationships for increased support and resources

In discussions with Cycle Hamilton's Board of Directors, it is important to be mindful that this is a completely volunteer run organization, and organizing multiple events and promoting them can be time intensive. Therefore, Cycle Hamilton could benefit from utilizing programs such as Canada Summer Jobs, which rewards non-profit organizations grants to hire summer students. These summer students can have a dedicated role for managing communications and digital engagement. For example, their responsibilities can include updating advocacy efforts on the website, corresponding social media channels, and newsletters. This ensures consistent and seamless communication about Cycle Hamilton's advocacy efforts with their members.

Cycle Hamilton can also leverage the existing relationship with McMaster University to continue working alongside sustainability students to achieve and execute key initiatives. The organization has a strong history with the university going back to 2015 when sustainability students supported the formation of Cycle Hamilton (Babbitt et al., 2016). Since then, Cycle Hamilton has collaborated with students at the university to build partnerships with businesses by proposing a certification that would identify the businesses as being bike friendly (Bao et al., 2018) and understood how to further engage members to elevate members experience with the organization. Students taking McMaster University's course, titled "SUSTAIN 2SS3: Advocating for Sustainability", from January to April 2023 will be working on a project aiming to determine best practices for Cycle Hamilton based on the findings of this report (McMaster University, 2022). It is clear that McMaster University is open to continuing this relationship, which is equally beneficial for the organization and students' experiential learning.

Since Cycle Hamilton currently hosts a number of diverse events for their audiences, from movie nights to Bike with Mike with a team made of strictly volunteers, it is important to manage expectations of the community. Another approach to optimize resources is to support other existing cycling and non-cycling groups with their initiatives to broaden awareness about Cycle Hamilton. This can include collaborating with organizations that share a similar goal and vision like Smart Commute Hamilton, Beautiful Allies, Hamilton Transit Riders Union, and the Hamilton Street Rail. Through expanding to new audiences with similar visions, Cycle Hamilton can foster community engagement amongst its own members while attracting new ones.

Limitations

Our research has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, participants included both members and non-members of the organization; however, we did not collect further demographic information or information regarding their level of involvement with the organization. It is important to recognize that different experiences and perspectives would have impacted responses that we did not consider. As a result of this uncertainty, participants less familiar with Cycle Hamilton may have suggested recommendations that the organization has already implemented. While we did clarify these recommendations by meeting with board members, we are mindful that some participants may have had limited knowledge about how the organization operates. Future research may find it beneficial to implement specific inclusion

criteria or to focus exclusively on members of the organization and compare the results to those obtained from the mixed participant pool.

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We would like to thank our Community Project Champions, Abbie Little (Cycle Hamilton board member) and Dr. Rachel Weldrick (Cycle Hamilton volunteer), for the opportunity to conduct this study and their insights and support throughout this research. We would also like to thank Dr. Kate Whalen, our principal investigator and course instructor, for her continuous support and expert guidance throughout this process. We would also like to thank the Fall 2022 SUSTAIN 3S03 students for organizing and hosting the Annual General Meeting and allowing us to leverage this opportunity to conduct our interviews. We also appreciate the participants for taking part in interviews and sharing their insights. Finally, we would like to extend our gratitude to the Cycle Hamilton Board of Directors for providing the opportunity to present our work and offering additional insights on the work of Cycle Hamilton and other cycling groups in the city. We thoroughly enjoyed our experience throughout this research study and appreciate the insights and learnings we have gained.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Advertisement

Newsletter Advertisement

Title: Are you interested in guiding the future direction of Cycle Hamilton? Receive a \$10 Starbucks gift card by participating in a short interview study

Body: Students in McMaster's SUSTAIN 4S06 class are looking for Hamiltonians who have been involved with Cycle Hamilton (i.e., a current member, joined a Cycle Hamilton ride, etc.) to participate in a short interview study. All participants will be compensated for their time (10 minutes) with a \$10 Starbucks gift card.

Interviews from this study will help guide Cycle Hamilton's future based on their members' perceptions. If you are interested in participating in the study, join us at the Cycle Hamilton AGM on Tuesday, November 22 – 6:00-7:30 PM at Radius (51 James Street South, Hamilton) to share your perspective.

To learn more, read the Letter of Information here [[LOI](#)] or contact Kate Whalen of McMaster's Academic Sustainability Program at whalenk@mcmaster.ca
This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance from the McMaster Research Ethics Board.

Appendix B: Letter of Information

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Assessing Member's Perceptions of the Greatest Impact that is or could be provided by Cycle Hamilton [REB# 6100]

Faculty Supervisor:

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Purpose of the Study: Learn about member perceptions of the greatest impact that is or could be provided by Cycle Hamilton.

As a member of the McMaster Community, we are inviting you to participate in an interview so that we can learn your perspective on Cycle Hamilton's current and future impacts. The interview is optional but taking part will support our sustainability course work and inform future directions of Cycle Hamilton.

Procedures involved in the research:

- ****The interview will last 10 minutes****
- We will ask you questions like, 'how have you been involved with Cycle Hamilton?' but the aim is to have a conversation to hear your thoughts on the topic.
- The interviews will take place at the Cycle Hamilton annual general meeting. While we will aim to remain at a distance so others cannot overhear our conversation, there is a risk that others might hear what is said. If you are concerned about this, we can try to find another spot or stop the interview at any time.
- ****We will audio record the interview. If you prefer, we will take notes by hand.**
- ****Audio files will be transferred to a secure drive hosted by McMaster called 'OneDrive', and then securely deleted from the recorder. Hand-written notes will be manually typed into a file on OneDrive and then shredded.**
- Audio recordings will be transcribed manually into writing within one week of this interview and then the audio recording will be securely deleted from OneDrive.
- Interview transcripts will be analyzed for key themes, which will be communicated into both a summary report and a research report, which we plan to publish online.

Potential Harms, Risks, or Discomforts

****The risks in the study are low. However, you may feel uncomfortable sharing your thoughts and feelings, or you may be worried that what you share with me may impact your relationships at school, work, or in the community. We will mitigate these risks by maintaining confidentiality and withholding personal information from being published.**

With respect to any concerns, you may have about sharing your thoughts with us, we want you to know that your feedback, both positive and critical, is important to us and we value your honest opinions. It is

unlikely that your feedback will negatively affect your reputation at work, school, or in the community because every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality and privacy, as described below.

Confidentiality:

- Your identity will be known to the student researchers, but we will store your data using a unique ID, rather than your name.
- However, we are often identifiable by the stories we tell, and our community is small enough that others may be able to identify you based on what you say. **We plan to publish our research findings with some direct quotes, but you can choose not to be quoted.
- Audio recordings can be personally identifying; however, the researchers will securely delete the recording within one week of your interview. We will store the transcription file on the university's OneDrive platform, which will only be accessible by members of the research team. The transcript file will be deleted from OneDrive on April 6, 2023.
- Only summary results will be published, which will not include any identifiable information.

Participation and Withdrawal:

- Your participation in this study is voluntary.
- You can stop the interview at any time, and you can still keep the incentive.
- You can choose not to have your quotes used in our research reporting.
- You can withdraw from making your interview available for research purposes for any reason, even if you had originally agreed and up until 15 minutes after your interview has been completed by advising a member of the research team so they can find and delete your recorded interview file. You will face no consequences for withdrawing at any time.

Potential Benefits:

This research may benefit you by contributing to efforts to inform the future directions of Cycle Hamilton, because we will learn and share the information about thoughts and opinions of organization members, with Cycle Hamilton. While not benefiting you directly, taking part in this interview will also contribute to our learning as community-engaged and sustainability-minded students, community members, and possible future researchers.

Information about the Study Results:

We expect to have this study completed by approximately 30 March 2023. Our reports will be available online at <https://asp.mcmaster.ca/experiential-learning-projects/past-projects/>

Questions about the Study:

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact our course instructor, Dr. Kate Whalen at whalenk@mcmaster.ca or 905-541-0645.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance from the McMaster Research Ethics Board.

For concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 2406
c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

To be confirmed orally with interview before starting the interview

- **Do you agree to participate in this study? Yes/No**
- **Do you agree for our interview to be audio recorded? Yes/No**
- **Do you agree for my team members and me to select and quotes from this interview, which will NOT be identifiable to you in any way, for use in our research report that we plan to publish online? Yes/No**
- **Have you read the COVID Letter of Information, and understand there remains a risk of exposure to COVID-19 from in-person contact? Yes/No**

Appendix C: Oral Consent Script

Recruitment Script

Hello. I'm [Recruiter's name]. How is everyone doing today?

After you built some rapport...

I wanted to let you know that we have a group of student researchers from McMaster University who are conducting 10-minute interviews to learn what people think about Cycle Hamilton. This study has been Ethics approved, and you will be given a \$10 Starbucks gift card for your time.

If they are interested, proceed to guide them to the student researchers and begin the interview process...

Oral Consent Script

Introduction:

Hello. I'm [your name]. I am conducting research about members perceptions of the greatest impact that is or could be provided by Cycle Hamilton. This interview is part of my SUSTAIN 4S06 Course at McMaster University . I'm working under the supervision of Dr. Kate Whalen.

Thank you for your interest in participating in our research.

because the LOI will be provided in advance, during recruitment and in hard copy at the event, ask...

Have you had time to read the Letter of Information?

If the participant responds that they did not read the LOI in advance, then proceed to go through the LOI with the participant and confirm the important points about voluntary participation and withdrawal listed below.

Confirm the following to the participant:

- Your participation in this study is voluntary.
- If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still be in the study.
- You can decide to stop at any time, even part-way through the interview for whatever reason.
- If you decide to stop during the interview, we will ask you how you would like us to handle the data collected up to that point, destroy or keep up to that point
- You can ask to remove your data from the study up until approximately 15 minutes after the interview, which is when we will have started to analyze the data, making it hard to remove specific data.
- You can choose not to answer some questions if you don't want to, stop the interview at any time, or remove your data up until 15 minutes after the interview, you can still keep the incentive.
- No matter you can still receive you gift card

Do you have any questions or want me to go over any study details again?

If the participant responds that they have read the LOI, then confirm...

Consent questions:

Do you agree to participate in this study?

If no,

- “Thank you for your time.”

If yes,

- Do you agree for our interview to be audio recorded? Otherwise, I can take notes by hand.
- Do you agree for my team members and me to select and quotes from this interview, which will NOT be identifiable to you in any way, for use in our research report that we plan to publish online? If not, I will make a note not to use any quotes from our interview.
- Have you read the COVID Letter of Information, and understand there remains a risk of exposure to COVID-19 from in-person contact? Yes/No
- “Here’s a \$10 Starbucks gift card as a ‘thank you’ for your participation.

Now, let’s jump into the interview”

Appendix D: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Assessing Member's Perceptions of the Greatest Impact that is or could be provided by Cycle Hamilton
Kiran Bassi; Helena Teng; Omar Shahid; Ali Salman; Mann Badami

[Start recording]

DRAFT QUESTIONS

1. We're here to talk about Cycle Hamilton. To start off, when and how did you get involved with the organization?
 - o *Probe*: Do you know if you are a member? If so, do you know what membership level you are?
 - o *(If they didn't specify the year they got involved)* What year did you join?
2. *(If they have been a member since 2021)* How have you been involved with Cycle Hamilton and to what extent?
 - o *Probe*: What has your experience been specifically in the past few years?
 - o Cycle Hamilton has engaged with members through group rides, annual general meetings, bike-in movies, newsletters, and social media posts. Which engagement has been your favourite or of the most value to you, and why?
3. *(If they have been a member since 2022)* Why did you decide to join Cycle Hamilton?
 - o *Probe*: What has your experience been cycling in Hamilton?
 - o What Cycle Hamilton initiative and/or service are you most looking forward to with respect to being a member?
4. Cycle Hamilton's goal is to make Hamilton the best place to get around by bike. What do you think can be implemented or offered to achieve this goal?
 - o *Probe*: What features would be valuable to add within the cycling community?
 - o What role would you like to see Cycle Hamilton play in achieving these?
5. Is there anything we missed or anything important you would like me to know?

We will be analyzing the data over the next several months. We will publish our findings on line in late March. You can take this card, which has the website where our report will be published, and you can always contact Kate Whalen by email if you have any questions

Thank you for your time!

END

[COMPLETE YOUR INTERVIEW LOG, CREATE YOUR ANONYMOUS TRANSCRIPT AND SAVE TO ONEDRIVE, DELETE IDENTIFIABLE FILES]

Appendix E: Thematic Map Iterations

