

# BLACK LIVES MATTER Action Plan

June 2021 Community Update

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PREPARED BY

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**BLACK  
LIVES  
MATTER**  
WORKING GROUP

## INTRODUCTION

As a wave of new awareness of anti-Black racism swept through the world in response to the murder of George Floyd and others, Hamilton Bike Share Inc. (HBSI) through our Everyone Rides Initiative (ERI) spoke up. [Blackout Tuesday](#) was the catalyst - public statements and black squares flooded social media. Our mission, vision and values are based on equity. With a ridership that includes Black, Indigenous, and racialized people, we simply could not stay silent. On June 3, 2020, our ERI staff published our [Statement on Black Lives Matter](#). But we knew we couldn't stop there. We had to take action.

In September 2020, the Board of Directors unanimously approved a framework through which to take action. Thus, the Black Lives Matter Working Group, and subsequently its [Black Lives Matter Action Plan](#) was born.

A year after our initial Statement, we are presenting our progress to the community. Through this, we have evaluated our efforts to date to address racial equity in our organization. We seek to remain transparent and accountable in our process. We invite you to reach out to us with your thoughts.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We carry out our work on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Anishinaabek, and within the lands protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum. We respect the Indigenous people who continue to live on this land. We recognize our responsibility to create peace and take only what we need in accordance with the agreement.

Our Black Lives Matter Working Group is made up of six White people - three staff members and three Board members. We acknowledge our privilege as White people. We recognize the continuous work required to decolonize ourselves and our work, as well as the importance of dismantling White supremacy.

As an organization, we've broadly transformed over the past year. We centered anti-racism as a priority in all the work we do. Our goal is to become an anti-racist organization and foster anti-racism within Hamilton and our broader relationships.

“ We pledge to develop a comprehensive action plan that outlines how our organization will build greater solidarity and [allyship](#) with organizations and communities of colour, and work towards dismantling racist structures. We cannot be silent as Black people are murdered and violence against them continues. Black Lives Matter. ”

## ABOUT THE ACTION PLAN

Our [Black Lives Matter Action Plan](#) is designed as a matrix to cover all aspects of our organization. We identified five lenses: **listen, amplify, strategize, implement, and evaluate**. These apply across the organizational sectors of **governance, personnel, stakeholders, programming, and operations** (see Table 1). An overview, description, timeline, and status of each action can be found in the Appendix.

**TABLE 1**

*Black Lives Matter Action Plan - Number of Actions by Lens and Organizational Sector*

|              | Governance | Personnel | Stakeholders | Programming | Operations | Total     |
|--------------|------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|------------|-----------|
| Listen       | 2          | 1         | 2            | 4           | 1          | <b>10</b> |
| Amplify      | 2          | 3         | 3            | 4           | 2          | <b>14</b> |
| Strategize   | 3          | 2         | 2            | 4           | 2          | <b>13</b> |
| Implement    | 2          | 1         | 1            | 5           | 1          | <b>10</b> |
| Evaluate     | 2          | 1         | 1            | 1           | 1          | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>11</b>  | <b>8</b>  | <b>9</b>     | <b>18</b>   | <b>7</b>   | <b>53</b> |

*We also developed a theory of change for our Action Plan. This enabled us to visualize the ultimate change in our community we are working towards (see Figure 1). It's also a framework through which we can evaluate our progress.*

# LISTEN

As a predominantly White-led organization, we were very conscious of our privilege and acknowledged that we needed to 'do the work' as White people. We don't have any racialized people on the Black Lives Matter Working Group to date. Likewise, we also don't want to engage in tokenism.

We are fortunate to have access to the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion (HCCI) for support as we take on this work. We sought their feedback to inform our Action Plan, and Kojo Damptey, Executive Director, shared the following:

- Our action plan was detailed and well thought out;
- It highlighted the importance of community input and feedback (e.g. rider surveys);
- We should start building trust with organizations in the Black community, of which he graciously provided us with a list of key stakeholders.

Over the last six months, we've reached out to these recommended organizations (including the Afro-Canadian Caribbean Association, Refuge, and Empowerment Squared), while continuing to foster existing relationships with our partner organizations serving Black, Indigenous, and racialized people. In these initial conversations, we have introduced staff to the resources and services available to their members or clients through ERI, such as introductory workshops to bike share, subsidized access to bikes and organizational access to bikes in order to run active programming.

**FIGURE 1**

Theory of Change for the Black Lives Matter Action Plan



In these conversations, we are learning about the people served by these organizations, and the nature of their primary programming. Next, we will coordinate with these organizations to determine how we can help facilitate access to ERI programs in a way that does not add more work for the partner organizations' staff, or more barriers for new riders.

Lessons and feedback we received from these organizations include:

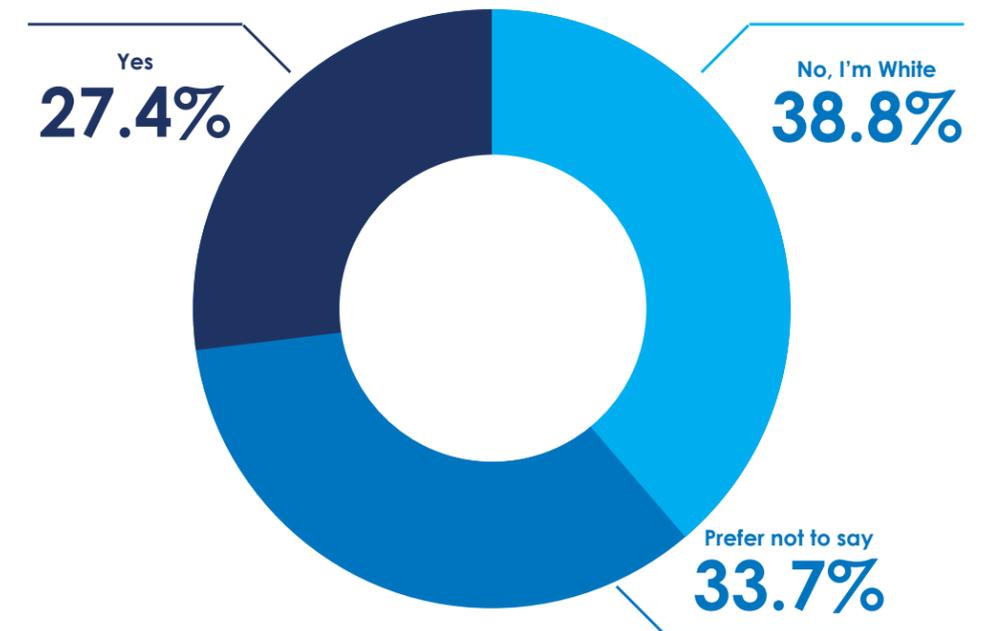
- Need for Spanish language translation;
- Preference for English materials to facilitate English as a second language learning;
- Avoid assuming that newcomers read a certain language;
- Develop ways to reach community members who do not live within the HBSI service area, but who travel within it;
- Building awareness around cycling as an available transportation option - some newcomers experienced scarcity of bikes in the communities they came from.

To get to know our Bike Share ridership better, staff updated the membership registration process in Fall 2020 to include a racial demographic question (see Figure 2). For the period of September 2020 to June 2021, 2716 new riders had completed the survey. More than 25% identified as Black, Indigenous, or racialized, 39% identified as White, and the remainder preferred not to say.

**FIGURE 2**

Responses from New HBSI Riders Regarding Racial Identity for the Period of September 2020 to June 2021.

Do you identify as being Black, Indigenous or a person of colour?



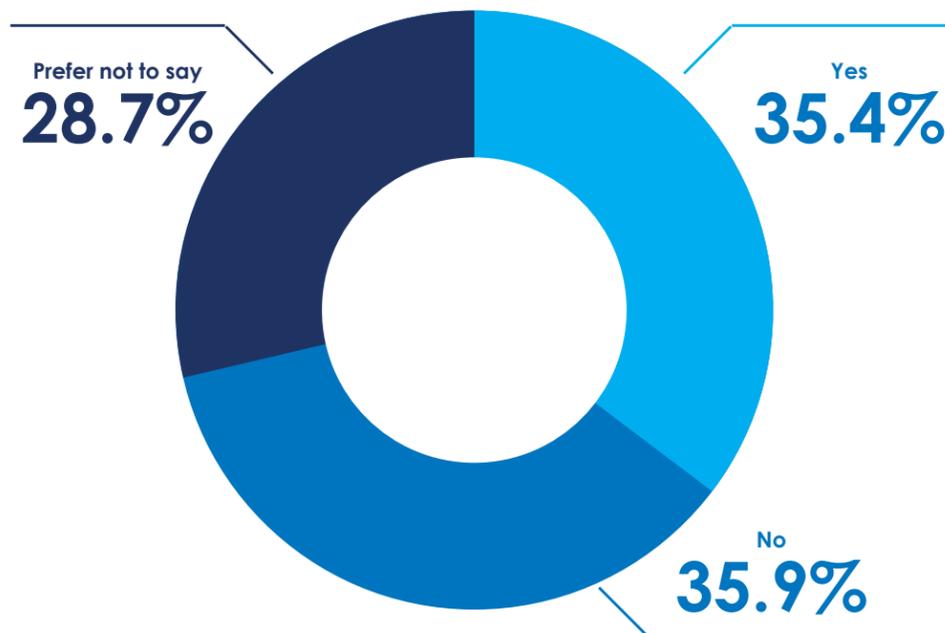
# LISTEN

Likewise, ERI staff updated its rider intake survey to gather information about racial demographics, and barriers experienced in accessing services and transportation. For the period of January to May 2021, all 199 new ERI riders completed the survey. More than 35 percent (n=74) identified as Black, Indigenous, or racialized, 35 percent (n=75) identified as White, and the remainder preferred not to say (see Figure 3).

These surveys highlight the higher proportion of racialized people holding ERI program membership, in comparison to the wider Hamilton Bike Share ridership. This is unsurprising, as the ERI program is geared to people of lower socioeconomic status, and because of systemic racism, Black, Indigenous, and racialized people are disproportionately represented in this socioeconomic category. Indeed, the purpose of ERI is to collaborate with communities to identify and remove the barriers to accessing and enjoying active, healthy, and environmentally sustainable transportation options in Hamilton.

**FIGURE 3**  
Responses from New ERI Riders Regarding Racial Identity for the Period of January to May 2021.

Do you identify as being Black, Indigenous or a person of colour?



The ERI survey participants who identified as Black, Indigenous, or racialized, shared that a lack of employment, housing insecurity, and racism were some of the barriers to accessing resources and services in the community (see Figure 4).

# LISTEN



**FIGURE 4**  
Barriers to Accessing Resources and Services Provided by Hamilton Organizations

These same survey participants identified the following barriers in accessing transportation services:

- Financial barriers to accessing buses, taxis, ridesharing, and cars;
- Lack of knowledge about programs available to help access transportation;
- Lack of bus routes in certain areas, inconvenient bus stop locations, and inefficient routes to destination;
- Physical or health limitations to accessing services, especially when not close by (e.g. 20 minute walk to bus stop).

Going forward, HBSI and ERI would like to collaborate and meet with other organizations which have also gathered information about race, cycling, and equity in Hamilton. Together, we can collaborate on dismantling barriers experienced by racialized people as a larger community. This is in line with our goal of fostering anti-racism within Hamilton.

Cultural humility is an important aspect of anti-racism. HBSI staff participated in anti-racism/anti-oppression training, and the Board of Directors will also participate in similar training.

The Black Lives Matter Working Group is accountable to the Board of Directors and regularly provides updates on Action Plan progress. The Board ensures that budget and operational assets are allocated towards the implementation of the Action Plan.

# AMPLIFY

Through our online platforms - our ERI website and the HBSI and ERI social media accounts - we work to centre content from Black, Indigenous, and racialized people, as well as content relating to anti-racism and anti-oppression. We ensure that our social media platforms reflect issues affecting Black, Indigenous, and racialized riders and community members.

We published a [resource page](#) on the ERI website as a tool for people to learn more about the history of racism in Canada, in cycling, and in our community. This curated list is updated as we gather new resources. Its content includes resources that members of the Black Lives Matter Working Group have personally engaged with. It contains information about:

- History of Black Lives Matter activism;
- Black history in what is now Canada;
- Social media accounts to follow;
- Hamilton organizations to support;
- Learning, training, and workshop opportunities.

*One of the first things we did after forming the Black Lives Matter Working Group was to turn our operations van into a mobile mural through which to share Black Lives Matter messaging (see Figure 5). Not only does the van amplify this message as it travels through the city, but it also does so when not in use and parked on busy Cannon Street.*

# STRATEGIZE

Largely internal work to date, the strategize lens has helped us focus processes, procedures, and strategic planning, around a backbone of anti-racism and equity. Creating the Black Lives Matter Action Plan was one of the first steps we took to facilitate this part of the work.

An equity criteria for hiring staff was completed, as well as an equity criteria for board of directors recruitment. The staff equity criteria was used in our recent round of Canada Summer Jobs hiring for youth, and we directly shared employment opportunities with partner organizations. As we learned through our Listen lens of barrier identification, the primary barrier that Black, Indigenous and racialized people face is employment resources and job security, so we will continue to share job opportunities within HBSI directly with organizations who serve those facing employment barriers.

In February 2021, HBSI undertook a strategic planning process. Throughout this process, we centred

We created our [BLM Sessions](#) blog post series to showcase work by Black visual artists, podcast hosts, musicians, directors, and writers. It focuses on work intersecting with cycling and local news. We also encouraged racialized members of the Board of Directors to post on our blog, and board member Midhat Malik shared a guest blog post about her top five cycling routes in Hamilton.

An updated code of conduct was approved by the Board of Directors which specifically codifies our commitment to equity and anti-racism. It also more broadly applies to volunteers, staff, and contractors.

**FIGURE 5**  
Black Lives Matter Mobile Mural on Operations Van



anti-racism and equity as foundational principles of our strategic plan. The strategic planning process also included doing a stakeholder analysis, and through that we assessed our stakeholders' commitment to anti-racism. In order to foster anti-racism within Hamilton and our broader relationships, we are taking responsibility to bring/invite everyone to the table.

Operationally, ERI staff have evaluated their work and goals to ensure anti-racism is being centred in the work they do everyday.

Through community gatherings, conferences, and workshops, ERI has provided training on how to apply an equity lens when building community resources or problem solving. We have received valuable community and partner feedback throughout this process, and we have learned that equity is a teachable skill, and that anyone can do the work.

# IMPLEMENT

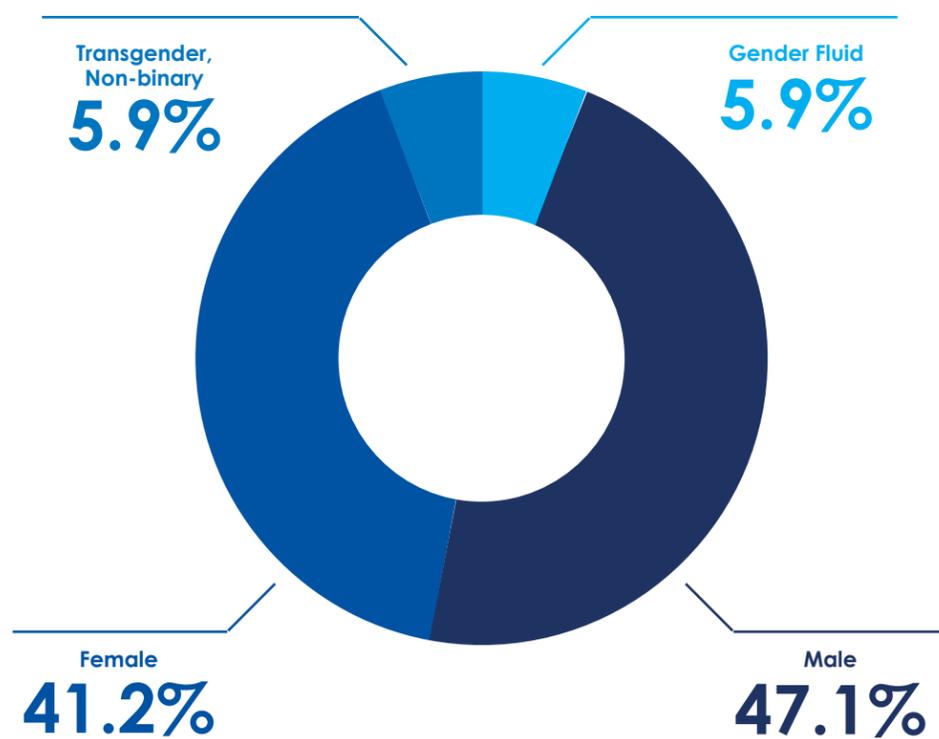
We created and disseminated a voluntary demographic survey to all HBSI staff and Board of Directors. Our goal was to understand the demographic representation within our organization, and then work to increase representation of equity seeking groups.

Alongside this, HBSI enrolled in the federal government's [50-30 Challenge](#) designed "to increase the representation and inclusion of diverse groups within their workplace, while highlighting the benefits of giving all Canadians a seat at the table" in Canadian organizations. The specific challenge goals are:

1. Gender parity ("50%") on Canadian board(s) and senior management; and
2. Significant representation ("30%") on Canadian board(s) and senior management of other under-represented groups: racialized persons including Black Canadians, persons living with disabilities (including invisible and episodic disabilities), Canadians who identify as LGBTQ2, and First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples as founding peoples of Canada are under-represented in positions of economic influence and leadership.

HBSI currently exceeds the gender parity benchmark of 50 percent among the Board of Directors and senior staff positions (see Figure 6). All HBSI managerial staff identify as female or gender fluid.

**FIGURE 6**  
Gender Identity  
Within the HBSI  
Board of Directors  
and Staff



# IMPLEMENT

A quarter of HBSI Board of Directors and staff identify as being part of underrepresented groups, including disabled, racialized, LGBTQ2SIA+, or Indigenous. We need to improve. In particular, we seek to increase representation of Black, Indigenous, and racialized people within our team and leadership. At this time, we have one person identifying as racialized, and two people identifying as having a disability, within our team.

To address this gap and the Whiteness of our organization, we developed the anti-racist and equitable hiring and board recruitment policies mentioned above. We are also actively creating targeted contract or employment opportunities within HBSI and ERI for Black, Indigenous, and racialized people. These opportunities include:

- Video production by Black & White Media, which also includes diverse rider representation in the video project (riders receive an honorarium).
- Anti-racism/anti-oppression training by Cole Gately and Pauline Kajiura of Intersecting.
- Illustrator for ERI resource materials.

Equity is front and centre in ERI's work. All feedback and information that is shared with us or learned along the way feeds into how we adapt and change our programs to dismantle and remove identified and lived barriers.

The tools and processes we developed through the listen, amplify, and strategize stages are being used to follow through on implementation of Action Plan steps, including barrier reduction and continued outreach to Black-led community organizations.

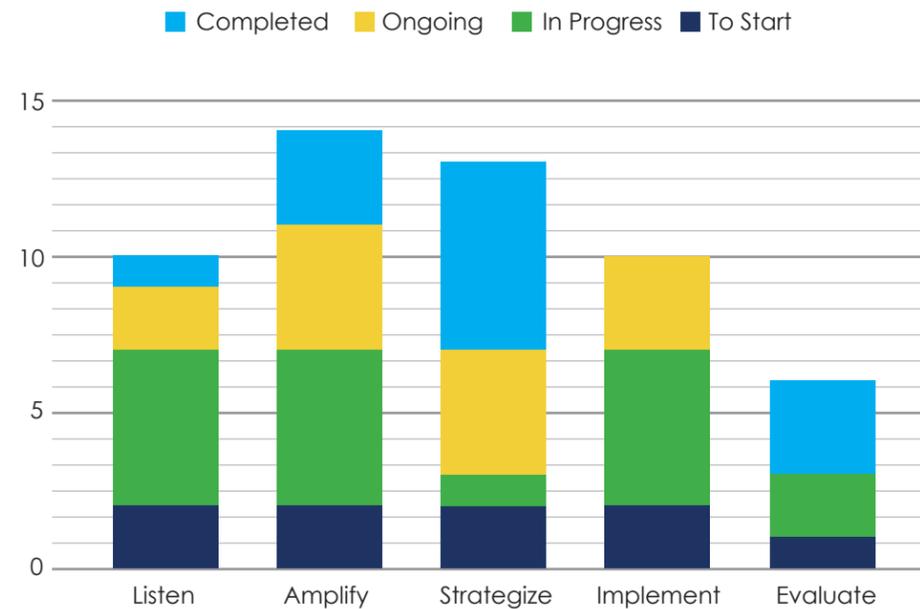


# EVALUATION

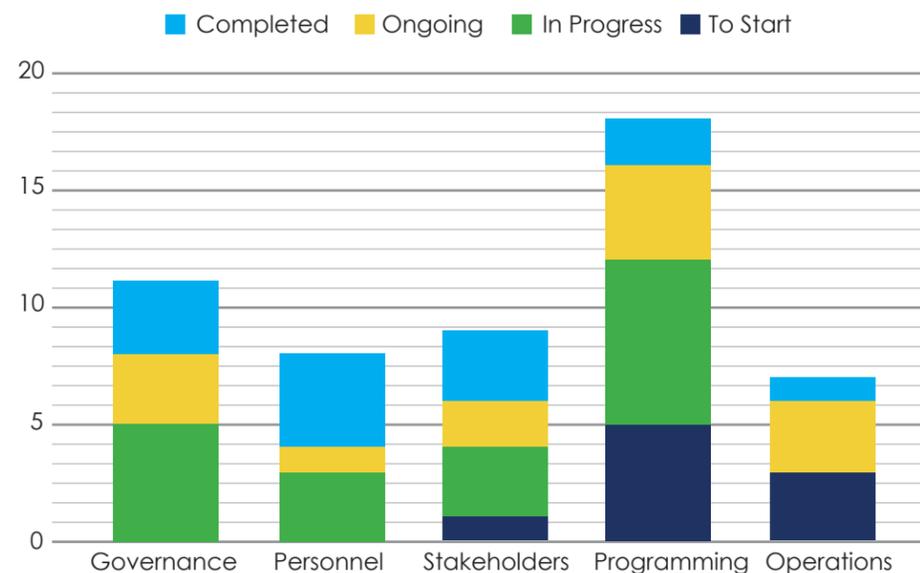
We built evaluation into our Action Plan matrix to be both mindful of and accountable to our progress on each action plan item.

To date, nearly all action items have been started (see Figures 7 and 8). Ongoing items have no particular end date - they have been meaningfully started, will continue, and in some cases have become part of routine organizational processes.

**FIGURE 7**  
Progress of Action Item Based on Lens



**FIGURE 8**  
Progress of Action Item Based on Organizational Sector



# EVALUATION

The Black Lives Matter Working Group members also reflected on our own personal experiences doing this work, and doing this work as White people. While working on decolonizing our organization, we're also individuals working through anti-racist unlearning and relearning. This individual work supports our collective work within the organization.

We recognize we have to continue to build relationships with the Black community in Hamilton, that we can't do this work with the absence of Black voices, and that the relationship-building process takes time. However, we are very committed to not being performative in this work. It isn't ultimately about us as White people.

We recognize this isn't a success or fail process, it's an integration of anti-racism into our work as a Bike Share team. We believe we've been able to have humility in our mistakes and missteps. We've also been doing this work virtually, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe we've been progressing well, despite the pandemic circumstances.

Through this process, we have continued to realize again and again different ways in which our organization, its processes and systems, are products of colonization and White supremacy. Today we reaffirm our commitment to decolonizing our organization, and taking action within our community on anti-racism.

## TO WRAP UP

Thanks for accompanying us through our anti-racism journey. This process is ongoing and we will continue to learn and iterate on our actions as we move through the steps in our Action Plan.

We continue to work on connecting with other organizations and stakeholders in the community to talk about anti-racism and how we can work together to ensure we are building and live in an anti-racist community.

We welcome all questions and feedback - [please get in touch](#).  
**We'd love to hear from you.**

**BLACK  
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