

OPIRG Public Interest Grant Proposal and Application March 2011

Description of Hamilton Womyn's Bike Fixin' Collective

The Womyn's Bike Fixin' Collective is an ambitious, dynamic and powerful new not-for-profit project devoted to actively engaging and transforming our Hamilton community. We focus on skill-sharing rather than merely "skill-showing". Growing from a place of having closely aligned with Hamilton Freeskool, Hamilton Womyn's Bike Collective also creates a space for the Hamilton community to experience social justice and environmental responsibility, both in action, and through dialogue. The Womyn's Bike Collective is made up by a group of women-identified people who work to nourish anti-oppressive and feminist values within the community. By creating a space in which community members can work toward a common goal – participating in and maintaining sustainable, accessible transportation – The Hamilton Womyn's Bike Collective creatively opens up an inspiring opportunity for politically-informed growth and transformation.

How our Project Achieves OPIRG McMaster's Objectives

- Advocates for the environmental, physical, and social welfare of individual Hamilton community members (both those attending McMaster University and those are do not), through promoting cycling and social awareness.
- Provides opportunities for OPIRG to sponsor and support our programs and activities by maintaining a positive connection through continued working-group status.
- Actively engages the community and works toward mutual appreciation for OPIRG whereby we promote OPIRG's services through, and in conjunction with, other community initiatives such as local bike shops and OpenStreets Hamilton.
- Dynamically creates engaging atmosphere amongst community members and McMaster students for continual dialogue and growth by encouraging open-minded learning and nurturing a positive, non-judgmental environment.

Outline of the Group's History, Objectives and Current Activity

History

In the late Spring of 2010, 12 women got together with intentions of becoming a Freeskool class for the purposes of building and maintaining bikes as sustainable transportation, and recreation. We got together several times in the late Spring to get to know each other, share our intentions and perspectives, and perform maintenance tasks on our bikes. During the Summer of 2010, we formulated a cohesive core group of organizers and skill-sharers. During mid-August, we attended a bike conference in Toronto (Bike Bike 2010). Inspired by all glorious things we learnt there, we applied for OPIRG working group status. Upon achieving a connection with OPIRG, we drew up a schedule of Autumn goals, and learned new skills together, practicing with tools and acquiring learning materials through generous donations (i.e. from friends). In mid-Autumn, we faced several challenges and each took some time away from the project during the Winter. In the late Wintertime, we met up with Randy Kay, and by the

motivation that inspired, we regrouped to review and redefine our intentions, goals and desires, as well as setting realistic personal boundaries and objectives.

Objectives

Currently we are working on re-creating our mandate and missions statements by re-evaluating our values and goals. On April 17th, we will host a group bike ride to spread word out about ourselves, OPIRG, and other local groups and events promoting sustainability and social awareness. In the next several months, we will appeal to local bike shops with intentions to be open to the community during a shop's regularly closed hours. Our first major goal is to acquire our own set of tools – an expense ranging from \$600 - \$800. We aim to create a volunteer retention and burn-out recovery strategy. We have been in contact with co-ordinators from the OpenStreets who approached our project: through this connection we aim to promote unity through a common cause. In the future, we plan to appeal to McMaster students to diversify our experiences and become more involved with engaging the greater Hamilton community.

Current Activity

Currently, we are writing up our mandates and missions statements for the purposes of maintaining an accessible website. This website already exists, and we are working toward improving its clarity. Each of our core members will have access to writing and maintaining this site. At the present, we are also making posters for our upcoming event (Apr. 17). We want to redistribute some of the literature we gleaned at BikeBike Toronto last summer and are working on gaining copies. In the coming months, funds pending, we want to co-ordinate our first Babac order. Being clear on realistic meeting times and dates for our individual members, and then, once that is well solidified, we will be opening ourselves up to the community through future events, and eventually a work shop.

Preliminary Budget

- Bicycle Tools - \$600 - \$800
- Promotions - \$80
- Learning Resources (zines, pamphlets, etc) - \$100

If approved for 2011 Working Group Status with OPIRG McMaster, our group would have access to an additional budget of \$250.

Timeline

- Open community gathering – early Spring 2010
- Committed space and confirmed use of shared tool -- May 2010
- Regular weekly meetings – Beginning July 2010
- Bike Bike Conference in Toronto -- August 2010
- OPIRG working group status -- September 2010
- Regular skill-sharing meetings – throughout Autumn 2010
- Met with Sarah Follett, director of BIKE: The Peterborough Community Bike Shop for insight -- November 2010
- Met with OPIRG's Randy Kay for inspiring motivation – February 2011

- Literature and promotional material printed – April 17, 2011
- Women and Queer-Positive bike ride to the Bay front -- April 17, 2011
- Appeal to community groups for space -- May 2011
- Acquire our own tool set – May 2011
- Broaden our network and anchor ourselves into the community -- Summer 2011
- Facilitate workshops like “Sexism and Three-Speed Hubs” – Winter 2011/2012