



## Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee

17 October 2016

**To:** Brad Rawson, OSPCD

**CC:** Skye Stewart, Office of the Mayor

**Subject:** Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee Efforts to Promote Bicycle Safety

Dear Brad:

We understand there has been considerable interest to understand what the Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee (SBAC) has been doing to promote the safety of bicyclists in Somerville. This is especially in light of the recent deaths of two cyclists right over our border with Cambridge in Inman Square and Porter Square. Bike safety is something the Committee, and City Officials, take very seriously and works on almost daily.

The Committee is organized into five Sub-Teams, organized around the five E's of bicycle planning, and each of the Sub-teams deals with bike safety. The activities of the Committee to promote bicycle safety will be discussed in the context of the 5 Sub-teams.

### **Education**

- Bike Talk Social Hour- The Committee hosts a monthly Bike Talk Social Hour every month at Aeronaut Brewery where we bring in speakers to talk about different bike-related topics. Many of these topics are bicycle education related. In the last year we have had talks on bike law, bike safety, and bike advocacy. See this [LINK](#) for a list of our talks.
- The Committee has held two special education events at Aeronaut, one was a Panel Discussion on how to Avoid or De-escalate Road Rage and another on How to Bike Safely on Unsafe Roads. The second panel discussion was in direct reaction to the dooring death of Amanda Philips in Inman Square. Both were well attended with over one hundred attendees and received quite a bit of press. See [Press article](#) on Safety Panel and a [video](#) of the event.
- Our web site has a page dedicated on how to bike safely. See [Link](#)
- We are trying to promote the use of the Dutch Reach method of opening car doors to prevent dooring. Have partnered with the SPD to use their variable message boards to promote the method.

- We have worked with local reporters who have recently published articles on bike safety. [Wicked Local article](#) on Bicycle safety.

### **Enforcement**

- The SBAC works closely with Somerville Police Department on enforcement issues. For instance, Deputy Chief Carrabino is an active ex officio member of the Committee. The Deputy Chief himself is out in the field nearly every day giving warnings and citations to bicyclists who make illegal bike maneuvers.
- We have conducted education campaigns about newly painted Bike Boxes on our streets that are designed to keep cyclists safe at intersections. We worked with the city to design a [Bike Box flyer](#) and used the flyers to educate cyclists and motorists at intersections and have partnered with T&P to include Bike Box education flyers in their parking permit renewals.

### **Encouragement**

- The SBAC encourages bicyclists to ride their bikes by holding bike events such as the Somerville Historic Bike Ride, the Tour de Somerville and the Illuminations ride. On these rides, we encourage everyone to wear a helmet and follow the rules of the road. Our next ride is the Tour de Somerville on Oct 29.
- We organize monthly Bike Breakfasts at Whole Foods on Beacon Street where we educate bicyclists about how to bike safely in the City and alert bicyclists about road conditions and hear their concerns
- We have hosted the Rush Hour Challenge every year as an event to highlight the use of alternative modes of transportation to get around the City and Boston metro region. See article on the [2016 challenge event](#).
- We produce a monthly newsletter the Somerville Bicycle News to promote education and awareness. See [LINK](#)

### **Evaluation**

- We promote safety on this team by evaluating existing conditions for bicyclists and proposing ideas to correct those conditions to make them more safe
- We participate in the City 's annual bike count to gather important data on bike traffic
- We worked with the City to develop the [Bike Facilities guidelines](#) to educate bicyclists and motorists about the different types of bike facilities they will encounter on our streets

### **Engineering**

- The Engineering team focuses on developing detailed engineering plans to improve bicycle facilities to roads to improve their safety. The team has recently provided plans to the City for Cutter Ave, Park Street, Summer Street and Webster Ave.

We hope this is a useful listing of the activities the Committee has focused on around promoting bicycle safety. If you or any City official, or Aldermen have questions, please feel free to contact me. One thing we could use help on is in the education of motorists

and drivers of large vehicles about how to operate safely around bicycles. Any ideas and assistance on this vitally important aspect of bicycle safety would be welcomed. Half of the recent cycling fatalities over the last three years have come after collisions with large trucks. We have to work on promoting safer interactions between drivers of large vehicles and cyclists.

Sincerely,

Ken Carlson, Chair  
On behalf of the Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee