

2014 Annual Report



**SOMERVILLE BICYCLE
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**





2014 ANNUAL BIKE REPORT

Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee

Community Representatives

Alex Epstein, Chairman

Charles Denison, Vice Chairman

Ken Carlson, Secretary

Ariel Horowitz

Enid Kumin

Alan Moore

Brian Postlewaite

Tim Talun

Tegin Teich

Ron Newman

Ex-Officio

Daniel Hadley, Office of the Mayor

Mark Niedergang, Board of Aldermen

Commissioner Stanley Koty, Department of Public Works

Terry Smith, Traffic & Parking Department

Chief Pasquarello, Police Department

Sarah Spicer, Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS	1
Bike lanes and sharrows	
Hubway	
Beacon Street Reconstruction	
Community Path Extension	
Grounding McGrath	
Infrastructure Proposals	
EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING	4
Bay State Bike Week, Rush Hour Race	
Bike Commuter Breakfast, Member Meet and Greet	
Rides	
EDUCATION AND POLICY	7
Memberships & Administrative	
Bicycle and Pedestrian Counts	
Interdepartmental Bicycle Initiatives Meeting	
Bicycle Parking	
Truck Sideguards	
NACTO Membership	
Complete Streets Policy	
GOALS FOR 2020	9
MAPS	12

INTRODUCTION

The Somerville Board of Alderman established the Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee (SBC) in 2001. The SBC works to improve conditions for bicyclists in the city, to promote bicycling as a means of transportation, and to help implement bicycle policy, programs, and routes for all ages and abilities.

As of 2014, according to the American Community Survey and the League of American Bicyclists, 7.8% of Somerville residents commute by bicycle, which is amongst the highest bicycle modeshares in the United States. Keeping in mind that commutes are only a small percentage of all trips, many more Somervillens cycle to run errands, to access educational opportunities and for personal enjoyment. This is nearly a fourfold increase in bicycle commuting over one generation (1990, 2%) and more than doubling in the last decade (2006, 3.5%). Somerville is now the highest bike commute percentage city in the East, #3 in its size category nationally, and 15th among all cities nationally. To supplement these statistics, the SBC and the City conduct yearly bicycle & pedestrian counts to better document and understand how transportation choices are changing.

The increase of bicyclists in the city has paralleled the improving conditions for bicycling in Somerville, which is currently recognized as a silver-level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists. These improvements over the past two decades include traffic calming measures, the Community Path, bicycle lanes, bicycle parking, and City-sponsored community bike rides. In 2014, the city dedicated resources to maintaining its existing lanes and also added new pilot green lanes on several main corridors, including Somerville Avenue and Bow Street. The SBC and the City recognize that cycling is as much about community and culture as it is about pavement and paint. Somerville benefits from its diverse and growing cycling population.

This was evident during the SBC's four rides held in 2014: the Library Ride, the Historic Ride, the Tour de Somerville, and the Illuminations Ride.

Over the next five years, the SBC will continue working to make bicycling better for all Somerville residents "ages 8-to-80," focusing on increasing both bicycle facilities and public outreach to promote accessible, everyday cycling in Somerville. Our overall goal for the year 2020 is twofold:

- 15% or more of Somerville residents commuting by bicycle, or approximately double today's rate; and
- Gold level Bicycle Friendly Community recognition from the League of American Bicyclists

INFRASTRUCTURE

Bike lanes and sharrows

In 2014, the SBC proposed and reviewed with Traffic and Parking a number of new bicycle lanes, the majority of which were approved and installed. The following streets were upgraded during 2014.

Bicycle lanes installed:

- Central Street, from Somerville Avenue to Summer Street
- Webster Avenue, from Union Square to Newton Street
- Medford Street, from Pearl Street to Walnut Street
- Summer Street, from Willow Avenue to Bow Street
- Sharrows were repainted where necessary.

Additionally, Traffic and Parking painted several bike lanes green to increase their visibility. The green paint was not installed across intersections where the bike lane did not already extend through the intersection, though turning conflict locations such as intersections are where the SBC believes the green color will be most valuable for safety. The City has stated its intent to address-conflict points using green paint or thermoplastic in 2015, including Somerville Avenue, Webster Avenue, Prospect Street , Broadway Street and Washington Street. See Map #1: Bicycle Network, for the current bicycle network.

Hubway

In 2014, the City of Somerville had a full year of operating all twelve stations currently comprising the system. Record ridership levels were recorded for Somerville's stations as well as for the system as a whole, which passed 2 million trips. Membership in Somerville increased by over 40% between December 2013 and December 2014, keeping pace with that of the system as a whole.

Beacon Street Reconstruction

Following the Committee's ongoing recommendation since 2006, and in light of massively increased bicycle ridership as measured by the Bicycle-Pedestrian Counting Program, the City advanced planning for Beacon Street that will more equitably allocate the right-of-way for bicyclists and pedestrians, rather than simply rebuild existing conditions. SBC continued to provide input to the City in 2014 to improve final designs for the City's first cycletracks, or physically separated bicycle facilities, along this heavily traveled bicycle route. The 100% design was submitted to MassDOT in Summer 2014. Most of SBC's design input comments were reiterated by a Toole Design Group peer review of the plans, including what will be the City's first bicycle signal and two-stage (Copenhagen) left turn boxes.



Hubway



Rendering of proposed design for Beacon Street



Rendering of Community Path Cedar-Lowell Extension

Construction will commence in Spring 2016 and completion is scheduled in 2018. This stretch of cycletrack is viewed by the SBC as the first phase of an eventual enhanced bicycling corridor between Porter Square and Kendall Square and into Boston.

To help bicyclists avoid Beacon Street construction hazards, the SBC developed and posted interactive detour maps on the SBC website. The maps show how to ride westbound and eastbound between Porter and Inman Squares without entering the construction zone.

Community Path Extension

2014 was a huge year for the Community Path: the State announced on April 30 that the entire Community Path extension to Cambridge will be constructed and funded as part of the Green Line Extension. This accomplishment was celebrated at a party on the Path at Lexington St. playground in September. The realization of the Path was made even more certain by the announcement at the end of December that the federal government would fund almost \$1 billion of the Green Line extension (including the Community Path). The Cedar St. to Lowell St. extension continued to be constructed, the opening being delayed by the contractor and MassDOT to 2015.

New Path at Assembly Square

A new multi-use path was opened at Assembly Square, paralleling the Orange Line tracks from the underpass to Draw 7 Park south to the new Assembly Square MBTA station. Eventually, this Path will continue along the tracks past the new Partners HealthCare building (under construction) and to the Somerville/Boston line near Sullivan Square with a (physical) possibility of continuing to the Sullivan Square station, and under Washington St. to Inner Belt in Somerville.

Mystic River Path under Route 28 officially opened

The long awaited bike and ped underpass under Route 28 at the Wellington Bridge officially opened on October 6, 2014, connecting two sections of the Mystic River paths in Somerville. There is now a multi-use path along 7,000 feet of the 8,000 feet of the Lower Mystic river bank in Somerville.

Guidance Provided on City Projects

The Committee gave advice to the City on various infrastructure projects throughout the course of the year. These projects include City, State and private projects:

- Union Square
- Central Broadway cycletrack options
- Community Path
- Davis Square, including Community Path bicycling connection
- Grounding McGrath Working Group: Alex Epstein invited to represent the Committee
- Beacon Street: Post-100% design input, reflected by consultant peer review

Through collaboration with the City, the above projects and efforts will provide greater accommodations for bicyclists.

Assembly Row

In July, SBC members met with the Assembly Row development team to learn more about the overall Assembly Row plans and to discuss bicycling-related issues such as access to and from Assembly Row, navigation within the development, and bicycle parking for visitors, residents, and employees. The development team was very eager to hear the SBC's ideas and

had already put a lot of thought into making the development bicycle friendly.

Union Square

In 2014, the City of Somerville selected a master developer for the redevelopment of Union Square. Members of the SBC were asked to meet with their development team and provide input at the outset of the project about how bicycling could best be best accommodated and encouraged in the developments to come and throughout Union Square. This input gave the development team insight into infrastructure issues and opportunities as well as introduced them to the bicycle culture in Somerville, encouraging them to keep bicycling related issues in mind as they move forward.

Several other large residential developments were permitted in Union Square in 2014, and the SBC reviewed bicycle parking being provided in each of these. In some cases, design revisions resulting in improved bicycle parking were made as a result of this feedback.

EVENTS

Bike Commuter Breakfasts

On May 12th, we held our fourth annual Bike commuter breakfast during Bay State Bike week at the Star Market on Beacon Street. It was a beautiful morning, and we had a very busy two hours as over 100 cyclists stopped by to enjoy refreshments compliments of Star Market, bike tune-ups compliments of Bike Boom, ice coffee compliments of Whole Foods Somerville, hot coffee compliments of Bicycle Belle, and of course chatting with fellow cyclists and members of the bike committee.

Starting in the summer and continuing well into the fall, the Bike Committee partnered with Whole Foods Somerville to hold monthly bike commuter breakfasts on the last Friday of every month (Green Streets Walk/Ride Days) at their Beacon Street store location. Whole Foods enthusiastically initiated and supported these breakfasts, seeking to coordinate with the SBC. The breakfasts were very popular and at several of them we were joined by local bike shops Somervelo and Bike Boom. The Bike Committee tabled at these breakfasts and we found it a great way to regularly interact with Beacon Street bike commuters. Late in the summer, Whole Foods upgraded their bike parking and installed a very useful bike repair station.

Bike Week at Brooklyn Boulders

During National Bike Month, the Somerville Bike Committee teamed up with the very bicycle-friendly business, Brooklyn Boulders Somerville, to co-promote a week-long celebration of all things bicycling, where we brought together the greatest number of bicycle advocacy and education organizations, fun bike-related activities, and bicycle-related commerce ever assembled in the Boston area. Between May 1 and May 9, we hosted a bicycle drive by Bikes Not Bombs, free bike tune-ups by local bike shops, a dogfight derby on bikes by SKUL, unicycling and bike polo demonstrations, a bike ride on the Minuteman Path, advocacy tables from the Somerville and Cambridge Bike Committees, MassBikes, the Boston Cyclists Union, Livable Streets Alliance, Commonwheels, the Somerville Bicycle Police, and many other local organizations. The week culminated with the Boston Bike Party One year birthday party which ended up next door at Aeronaut Brewery.



Bike Week Commuter Breakfast & Tabling



Library Ride

Bike Rides

The Committee organized four bike rides this year: an early spring Library Ride, a late spring Historic Ride, a fall Tour de Somerville, and a winter Illuminations Ride.

Library Ride

On Saturday, May 3, 2014, the SBC and the Friends of the Somerville Public Library hosted the Library Bike Ride, a six-mile ride across Somerville visiting the three library branches. Proceeds from the ride supported the Friends of the Somerville Public Library and the installation of a public bike pump at the Central Branch. Somerville Police escorted the ride and Beacon Street Whole Foods provided refreshments.

Spring Historic Ride

On Sunday, June 8, 2014, the SBC and the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission co-sponsored our 13th annual Bicycle Tour of Historic Somerville, leaving from the newly opening park at Assembly Row at Assembly Square. This year's theme was Innovative People, Places and Product. About 110 enthusiastic cyclists (counted at Prospect Hill) visited sites of innovation in Somerville, ending at the new "Aeronaut" space on Tyler Street.

Tour de Somerville

The SBC's 22nd annual fall bike tour took place on Saturday, September 20, 2014. This year's theme was Rivers and Rails. For the first time, the ride started and ended at the new Assembly Row development. About 100 participants rode 12 miles along the Mystic River as well as portions of the planned Green Line Extension. Assembly Row provided refreshments at the beginning of the ride, and Redbones provided delicious lemonade and cornbread at our halfway stop at Trum Field.



2014 Spring Historic Tour



Illuminations Ride



Tour de Somerville

The Somerville Police escorted the ride, providing a safe and comfortable experience and the ability for the group to stay together through traffic lights.

Illuminations Ride

We held our fifth annual Illuminations ride coordinated with the Somerville Arts Council. The ride was held on Saturday, 13 December. We had a large turnout of approximately 150 cyclists. We rode slowly through the streets of Central and Spring Hills and viewed some amazingly lit homes. The weather was particularly nice and we extended the ride into Davis Square to see the wonderful display at Cutter Street. Afterwards, many cyclists joined the trolley riders in City Hall for cookies and hot cocoa.

MEMBERSHIP & ADMINISTRATIVE

New members

- Tegin Bennett, Former Cambridge Bicycle Committee member and resident of Winter Hill
- Ariel Horowitz, Tufts University graduate student and resident of Powderhouse.

Media

The Committee actively used our revamped web site (www.somervillebikes.org) to better communicate with the cycling community. New on the web site is a Google calendar of events and important meetings and new links including links to a Beacon Street workaround route and links on how to bike safely. We were also very active posting on our Facebook page and as a result, saw a tremendous increase in how many people like our page. The Committee Facebook page has over 750 likes and an active commenting community.

Budget

The SBC received its first nominal budget from the City in 2014 to help defray recurring expenses that members until then had generously donated for over a decade. The budget was set at \$100.

Education

The City organized its yearly bicycle and pedestrian counts in September this year, with SBC members and volunteers helping at locations around the city. The counting project helps the city better understand where people walk and bike the most, as well as the impact of built environment improvements made year to year, and pointing out areas in need of future improvements.

Although the 2014 counts show overall less bike and pedestrian traffic, the proportion of bike and ped traffic along the busier corridors continues to increase; especially along Beacon Street, Somerville Avenue, and the Community Path. This still data confirms fast rates of bicycling growth in Somerville since 2010. The full bicycle and pedestrian count report will be available on the city website in 2015.

Annual Report & Interdepartmental Bicycle Initiatives Meeting

The Committee met with the City departments in March 2014 to discuss proposed improvements to the bicycle infrastructure and plans for bike-related projects. Attendees included leadership from the Department of Public Works, Police Department, Traffic and Parking, and the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development. SBC reviewed 2014 accomplishments and discussed specific initiatives to increase the safety and connectivity of bicycle facilities in Somerville.

POLICY

Bicycle Parking Requirements for new city zoning ordinance

The SBC provided guidance on the design of bicycle parking proposed in several development projects under review, ranging from small developments on Beacon Street to large buildings planned for Assembly Row. At the request of the City Planning Department, the SBC formed a Bike Parking Subcommittee to review the language and requirements of section 9.15 (bicycle parking) of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. This subcommittee performed a thorough review of comparable regulations in peer municipalities before compiling a set of recommendations that included: distinguishing between long- and short-term bicycle parking; increasing the amount of required bicycle parking for many uses and adding requirements for presently-unregulated uses; and encouraging bicycle commuting through mandating access to shower facilities. These recommendations were presented to the SBC for approval in early 2014 and discussed with the Planning Director in late 2014. SBC's recommendations were submitted and incorporated into the proposed new Somerville Zoning Ordinance, to be considered by the Board of Alderman in 2015.



Union Square Bike Corral

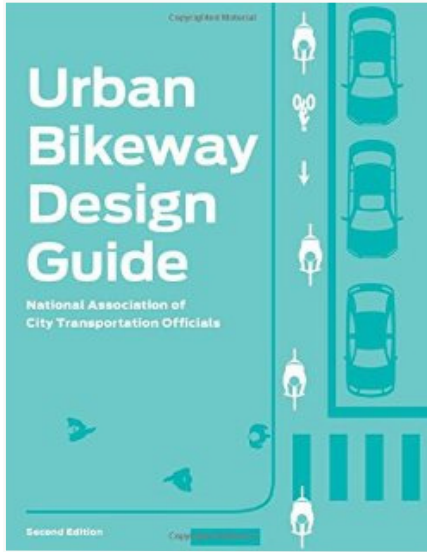
Truck sideguards on city-owned trucks

To help protect bicyclists and pedestrians from being swept under the rear wheels of large trucks, as occurred several times in the Greater Boston area in 2014, including one death in Boston near the Somerville border in Sullivan Square, the SBC recommended that the City require sideguards on large trucks operating on City streets. Somerville DPW followed the lead of Boston DPW and equipped one large city-owned truck with sideguards. DPW has since updated its vehicle procurement requirements to require sideguards on future truck purchases. In October 2014, Boston approved a new ordinance requiring city-contracted trucks to also install sideguards. The SBC recommends and anticipates that Somerville will follow suit with similar measures to promote this life-saving technology in the near future.

Complete Streets ordinance and adoption of NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide

After Somerville's first application for recognition by the League of American Bicyclists as a Bicycle Friendly Community in 2011, the League's top-level recommendation to the City to become more bicycle friendly was to adopt a Complete Streets policy. Such a policy would require all types of street projects to safely and equitably serve all users—bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists—as the rule and not as the exception, codifying today's best Somerville street design outcomes as the required outcome.

Based on national research and on language from the Massachusetts Municipal Association, the SBC drafted a Complete Streets Ordinance bill in 2012 for Somerville that was endorsed by the Mayor



and subsequently considered by Board of Aldermen committees. Following minor amendments over the last two years, including language adopting the guidelines of the National Association of City Transportation Officials, the Ordinance was unanimously approved by the Board of Aldermen on May 8th, 2014.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals chart a course to achieving the SBC’s vision of 15% bicycle commuting mode share on safe, connected routes by the year 2020.

- Improve city streets citywide with the best possible bicycle facilities and calmed vehicular traffic, allowing residents from 8 to 80 years old to feel comfortable bicycling for transportation
- Ensure Somerville’s neighborhoods are well connected with employment centers such as Kendall Square and Assembly Square
- Increased access to bike parking in all neighborhoods, both commercial and residential;
- Create dense geographic coverage and year-round operation of the Hubway bikeshare program.

- Progressive zoning that anticipates and supports increased bicycle use.
- At least 20% of Somerville Public School students commute by bicycle.
- All residents are informed about bicycling rights and responsibilities in the city.
- Established increasingly open dialogue with Traffic and Parking and Somerville Police.

Planning and Infrastructure

The SBC will continue to work with the city on existing planning and infrastructure projects and will propose some new ones as well.

The City will be undertaking a Citywide Mobility Study in 2016 that will need a lot of input from cyclists (and would-be cyclists). It is aimed to create a network plan for all modes. The City is working out further details but should have a consultant team on board in early 2015. The SBC anticipates being highly involved in this effort. Helping develop a comprehensive bicycle network plan within the Mobility Study framework is a key goal. At the same time, SBC will look at providing input into the Cambridge Bicycle Plan, particularly the connections to Somerville.

Furthermore, the SBC will continue to participate in the Union Square Transportation Study, Davis Square Study, Central Broadway Initiative, and other transformative opportunities.

Beyond major planning efforts and capital projects such as Beacon Street, Broadway, and Davis Square, the SBC will work with the city to get bicycle facilities installed on the following streets:

- Park Street, from the railroad grade crossing to Somerville Ave
- School Street, from Medford Street to Highland Avenue

The SBC will also monitor the progress of the ongoing projects:

- Beacon Street reconstruction project, including the impact of construction on bike commuting and the implementation of the new bicycle facilities.
- Interim McGrath Highway improvements, which will include new dedicated bike lanes in and around McGrath Highway, Washington St, and Somerville Ave.
- Union Square Early Action improvements which will include improved signilization, new bike lanes, bike boxes, pedestrian enhancements, as well as a potential contra-flow pilot.
- Central Broadway streetcape project is still in it's early planning phase and will continue to move to 25% design. The deisign includes improved pedestrian and bicycle facilites, including a proposed cycle track.

Lastly, the SBC has identified locations in the city where temporal "Do Not Enter" signs are located in order to prevent traffic congestion, to keep cars away from schools when children are traveling to or from them, or to protect neighborhoods from rush hour cut through traffic. The SBC felt that these "Do Not Enter" signs were not intended for bicycles when they were originally installed and that their restrictions put an unfair burden for bicyclists to travel longer distances than necessary or on roads that are not as safe or comfortable as the neighborhood streets affected by these restrictions. The SBC presented proposals to add "Except Bicycles" signage to some of these existing signs in order to legally allow bicycle travel at all times.

The Traffic Commission voted down the first set of requests by the SBC, however in 2015 the SBC will continue to work with the Traffic Commission to address any concerns they have and to get these restrictions eliminated for bicycles.

Membership

- Recruit at least five additional members
- Focus membership growth in parts of the city that are not represented on the committee. The committee especially seeks members from Wards 1, 4 and 7. The SBC may speak with the respective aldermen for recommendations.

Education & Outreach

More emphasis on building connections with the Somerville Public Schools, using SBC's new high school representative;

Distributing free lights and bells;

Compile a "Bicycle Theft Factsheet" both to help citizens avoid becoming a victim of bicycle theft and to enable victims of bicycle theft to access resources for bicycle recovery;

Distributing our revised "Somerville By Bicycle" map and Safe Riding Tips at events;

Expanding Bike Week and Bike Month programming, including collaboration with the Mayor, City departments, and external organizations, including surrounding community BACs and bicycle advocacy organizations;

Annual bicycle counting, to chart bicycle usage, led by the Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development (OSPCD) in coordination with the SBC;

Regular enforcement and recording of dangerous traffic behavior, led by the Police Department.

Distributing our revised "Somerville By Bicycle" map and Safe Riding Tips at events;

Expanding Bike Week and Bike Month programming, including collaboration with the Mayor, City departments, and external organizations, including surrounding community BACs and bicycle advocacy organizations;

Annual bicycle counting, to chart bicycle usage, led by the Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development (OSPCD) in coordination with the SBC;

Regular enforcement and recording of dangerous traffic behavior, led by the Police Department.

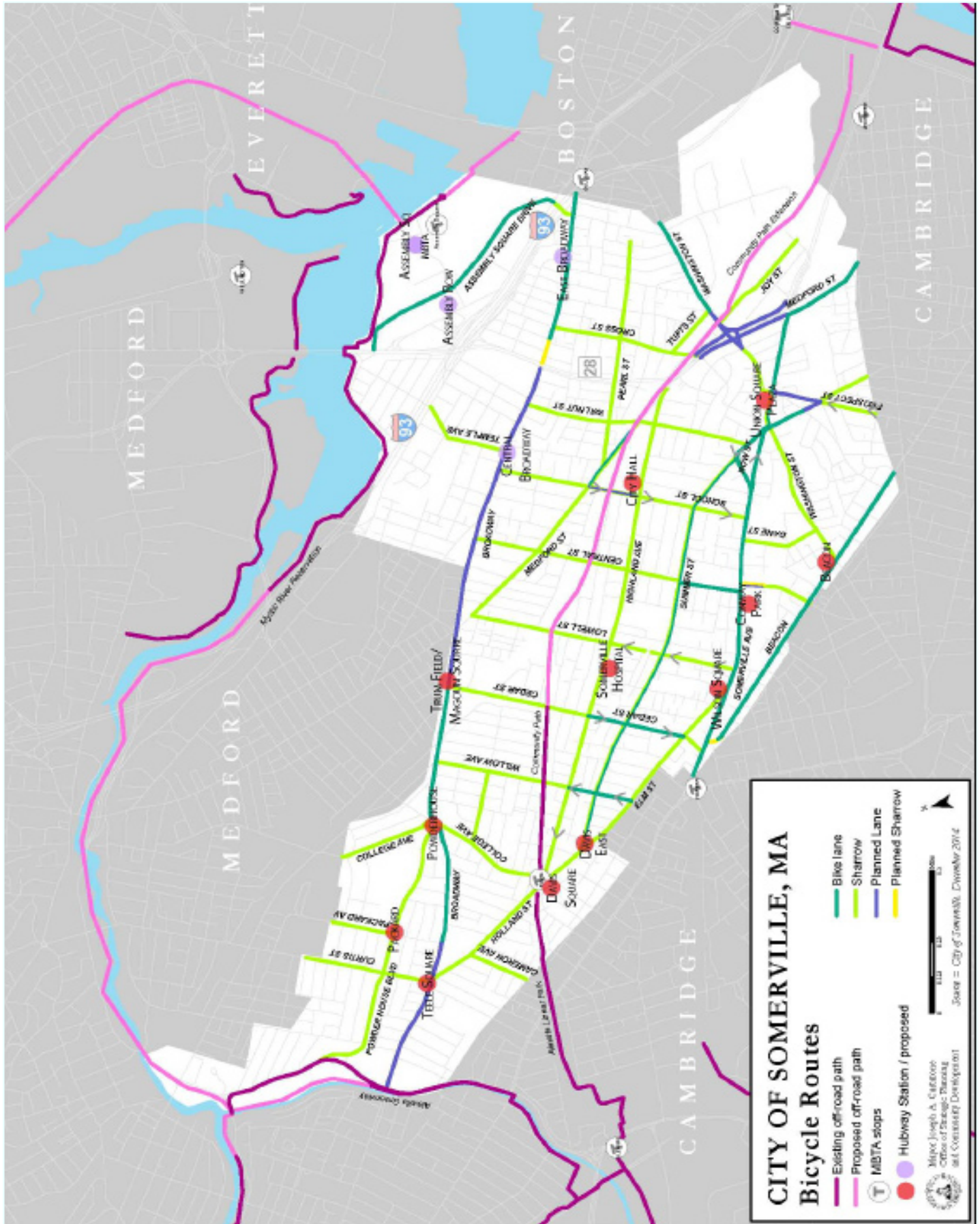
Policy

- Implement the DPW abandoned bike removal tagging policy, first proposed by the SBC in 2011
- Arrange and hold quarterly meetings with Traffic and Parking and Somerville Police
- Make truck sideguards required in the City, beginning with City-owned and contracted heavy-duty vehicles
- Pilot yield streets that are two-way for bikes but one-way for cars, and add to the NACTO guidelines using Somerville as a pilot city
- Seek additional funding opportunities to allow Somerville to pilot year-round or extended-season operation of Hubway



Tour de Somerville

MAP #1: CURRENT BICYCLE NETWORK INCLUDING HUBWAY STATIONS



The seal of Somerville, Massachusetts, is a circular emblem. It features a central illustration of the Old Powder House, a stone building with a flag flying from a tall pole. The text "MUNICIPAL FREEDOM GIVES NATIONAL STRENGTH" is written in a large, serif font around the top inner edge of the seal. Below this, "TOWN 1842" is on the left and "1872 CITY" is on the right. At the bottom, "HONORABLY PURCHASED FROM PAWTUCKET'S • 1639" is written in a smaller font. The outermost ring of the seal contains the text "SOMERVILLE, MASS." in a large, bold, serif font.

SOMERVILLE BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

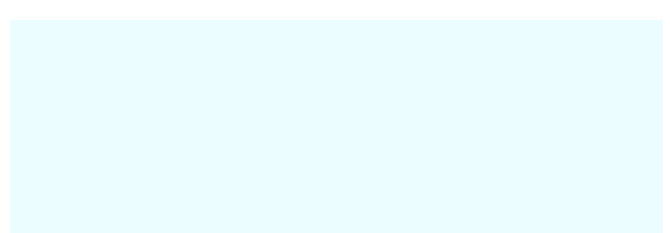
For more information:

<http://www.somervillema.gov/departments/bicycle-committee>

AND

<http://www.somervillebikes.org>

OLD POWDER HOUSE



2014 ANNUAL REPORT



**Somerville Bicycle Advisory
Committee**