

Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee Annual Report 2019





2019 SOMERVILLE BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Community Representatives

Tom Lamar, Chair

Katie Pierce, Vice Chair

Ted Lester, Secretary

Alex Anderson (Resigned Jun 2019)

Emily Balkam

Ken Carlson

Mark Chase (Resigned Mar 2019)

Alex Epstein (Resigned Nov 2019)

Ted Feldman

Alex Frieden

Kevin McGrath

Alan Moore

Brandon Stafford (Resigned Mar 2019)

Mark Vollinger

Lena Webb

Michael Weber

Ian Woloschin

Ex-Officio Members

Katjana Ballantyne, City Council

Stephen Carrabino, Somerville Police Department

Adam Polinski, Office of Strategic Planning and
Community Development

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Note from the Chair

2019 was a year of contrasts, of both highs and lows for safer streets in Somerville. In some ways, Somerville saw more high-quality bicycle infrastructure installed than any other year, as several long-planned projects came together. The city's flagship project, Winter Hill in Motion bus lanes and protected bicycle lanes, brought safer streets and better transit to an underserved neighborhood. In addition, the city added bicycle lanes or protected bicycle lanes on several streets, including protected bicycle lanes on Broadway connecting the Winter Hill in Motion bicycle lanes to existing bicycle lanes and on Washington St connecting Union to Sullivan. In the not too distant future, we could have a safe bike route stretching the length of Somerville from Charlestown to Arlington, or from Medford to Cambridge.

But we're also reminded how far we have to go before we have a complete bike network. After years of process and countless meetings, Powder House Boulevard was reconstructed without any protected bicycle lanes, or even any bicycle lanes in one direction. While we're optimistic that Powder House Boulevard will still eventually be safe for biking, the project serves as a reminder that we can never take progress for granted, and sustained advocacy is needed. We still have our work cut out for us as we fill in countless gaps in the network: bike lanes that end suddenly or don't provide enough separation from speeding traffic, and neighborhoods still cut off from the rest of the city by highways.

Studies on people's willingness to bike show that around 1% of people will bike regardless of how unpleasant it may seem; around 10% will bike given some basic bike lanes or traffic calming; but a majority of people are "interested but concerned" and only bike given the safest infrastructure: off-road paths, calm neighborhood streets, and a continuous network of protected bike lanes physically separated from speeding cars. Every Somerville resident deserves to be safe while biking, and we must hold ourselves and the City to high standards to achieve that goal.

I became Chair in midway through 2019, after serving on the committee since 2015. Our outgoing chair, Ken Carlson, left big (clipless?) shoes to fill, as Somerville has more protected bike lanes, more bike share stations, more bike events and outreach, and more people biking than ever.

I'm tremendously proud of the work SBAC has done in 2019. In particular, I'd like to thank several SBAC members who stepped down after a successful tenure: Alex Anderson, Mark Chase, Alex Epstein, and Brandon Stafford. In addition, our city liaison Mike Tremblay stepped down after accepting another job. I'd like to thank all the members of the committee; our ex officio members, and volunteers - Somerville wouldn't be as bikeable today with your efforts, and I look forward to what our community can accomplish in the future.

-Tom Lamar, Chair

Introduction: Retrospective on the Last Four Years

I was asked to look back at my four years as Chair of the SBAC. Interestingly, I write this piece in the 7th week of the Coronavirus lockdown, ironically in the beginning of a Bike Month like no other. It's amazing to think back how different life was just two short months ago, and how different it was during my time as Chair between Spring 2015 and Spring 2019. It truly feels like an exercise in time travel. I am certain we will come out of this "Upside Down- Stranger Things" time period with a better sense of what's important in our lives. One clearly important thing is health: the health of ourselves and our family, the health of our community, and the health of our environment and planet. I feel that by fulfilling the mission of the SBAC, to promote bicycling as a means of transportation and to improve safety conditions for bicyclists in the city, we are helping to promote the health of our citizens, our city, and our planet.

I have to say it was truly an honor to serve as Chair of the Committee over these four years and to work so closely with such an amazingly dedicated group of SBAC members, city employees, and elected representatives in improving bicycling in our community. Over this time period, we became a Gold Level Bicycle City, we committed to a Vision Zero policy for keeping all roads safe, and we attained a 9% bicycle mode share in the most recent American Community Survey, fifth highest in the nation. We (almost) got Beacon St reconstructed with protected bike lanes and we made significant strides forward in all of the Five E's of bicycle planning (Engineering Evaluation, Education, Encouragement and Enforcement/Safety). This time period is well captured in photographs, shout outs to key people, and cool graphics and photos in a [Bike Talk](#) that Tom Lamar and I gave mid-year.

I served on the Committee for 6 years prior to becoming Chair. When I became Chair, I knew enough to try to distribute the enormous workload of the Chair by establishing sub-teams focused on the Five E's. This enabled a number of members to become Team Leads and allowed all members to focus on what they were most passionate about. This model has served us well to this day.

The Encouragement Team, whose goal is to get people biking, was ably led over those four years by Alex Anderson, Laura Borelli, and currently, Arah Schur. They did an amazing work in putting together great bike rides (e.g. Tour de Somerville, Somerville Historic Ride, Tour de Ice Cream), awesome events (The Rush Hour Challenge and the ever popular Bike Month Kick-Off at Aeronaut Brewery) and our monthly Bike Breakfast at Whole Foods, and in encouraging people to get out to ride.

The Education Team during this time was led by Sarah Wasserman, Katie Pierce and now by Michael Weber and they have done a terrific job in educating the public about all aspects of bicycling. They created a lot of education content (flyers during the Beacon St reconstruction, educational pamphlets about safe bicycling, short videos), assisted in the design of the Somerville Bikes map, helped pull together panel discussions, and of course, helped arrange the popular Bike Talk Social Hour at Aeronaut which had its 54th talk in December.

The Engineering Team, one of our wonkiest (in a good way), has been led by Brian Postlewaite, Tom Lamar, Brandon Stafford, and now Ted Feldman and has been responsible, in partnership with the City, for the addition of 10 miles of bike lanes, importantly including 4 miles of the gold standard in bike facilities, protected bike lanes. The Engineering Team has worked on concept plans for Park St., Summer St., Webster Ave., Holland St., Broadway, Medford St. and Powder House Blvd. among many others and really extends the engineering capabilities of the City.

The Evaluation Team, led over time by Alex Anderson, Alex Frieden, and now Ted Lester, has been responsible for evaluating which roads in the City can accommodate bicycle facilities and has helped to collect data (counts of on-street parking, bicycle counts) to help determine what facilities can be included on the street, including innovative designs like contraflow bike lanes. Evaluations were conducted on many streets, including Webster Ave, Park St and Elm Street. One of the biggest accomplishments of this team was the work done to develop protected bicycle lanes on Webster Ave, which involved a year-long campaign of bicycle counts and community outreach. This effort led to the creation of a playbook for advocating for streetscape improvement (largely written by Mark Chase) that we now routinely use. This team also provided oversight of the Beacon St. construction project, including putting together a terrific bike detour route.

And last but not least is the Enforcement and Bike Safety Team, led by Ian Woloschin and now Kevin McGrath. This team has forged a close bond with the Somerville Police Dept. and works closely with the SPD to help enforce traffic laws that keep everyone safe, developed a crash report to be used following a bike crash, and provided on-street safety messaging like promoting the use of the Dutch Reach. This team has written letters to Ride Hailing Companies to do a better job of educating their drivers about being safe around bicyclists. This effort was picked up on by the Boston Globe article and helped spur meetings with Uber and Lyft officials to help effect change in driver behaviors and education level around bikes.

I am so proud of all the leadership shown by so many people on the Committee. In addition to the Team Leads, I was blessed with fantastic fellow officers, Tegin Teich and Tom Lamar as Vice Chairs and Charlie Dennison, Enid Kumin and Katie Piece as Secretaries. Other leaders were Mark Chase, who has done an incredible job leading the Neighborways Project of creating safe streetscapes on quiet streets, and Alan Moore and his colleagues for all their advocacy that is resulting in our getting the Community Path extended all way to Lechmere. We also led the way with a very active social media presence and with our very popular monthly newsletter, the Somerville Bike News, initiated by the inimitable Brandon Stafford.

The two projects I'm most proud of leading was in getting protected bike lanes on Webster Ave, and helping to create a truck safety video that was motivated by the death of my friend, Joe Lavins, who was run over by a tractor trailer in Porter Square in 2016. We led a fundraising effort in Joe's name and along with another friend of Joe's and bike advocate leaders from Livable Streets Alliance, Boston Cyclists Union and MassBike we made a short video, [Safer Trucking in Changing Cities](#), that was designed to educate truck drivers about how to operate safely around people who bicycle, which has been used by municipalities (like Somerville and Cambridge) and companies to train their drivers.

All that we accomplished over this period could not have happened without the blood, sweat and tears of the amazing staff at the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development led by Brad Rawson, with his talented staff of people like Jenny Molina, Mike Tremblay and Adam Polinski. We had amazing partners (not in crime) at the Somerville Police Department led by everyone's favorite bike cop, Steve Carrabino, and the backing of our amazing City Councillors (many of whom are either car-free or car-light). And of course, we had an incredible amount of support from Mayor Joe Curtatone, whose progressive vision of Somerville's future helped guide our work. And of course, the SBC Chair stands on the shoulders of giants, the past Chairs: Alex Epstein, Brian Postlewaite, Alan Moore and Greg Palmer.

I strongly feel that the SBAC's leadership has been placed in the very capable hands of Tom Lamar, and he has brought together a solid team of officers and "E" Team Leads. I am proud of what we have accomplished, and I can't wait to see what Tom, the SBAC and the City of Somerville accomplish in the years ahead. I won't be watching from the sidewalks as I plan to stay actively involved in the Committee- there is still a lot of work to do!

-Ken Carlson, Former Chair

Accomplishments in 2019

The Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee is divided into five Teams, aligned along the Five E's of Bicycle Planning: Engineering, Evaluation, Education, Encouragement, and Enforcement. The Engineering and Evaluation team works together to execute on a number of City-wide projects, helping draft designs, provide feedback to City planning officials, and make recommendations based on available data and best practices. This year, the teams worked to help the City draft plans for Powder House Square and Powder House Boulevard. In addition, the teams worked with the MBTA and other transit partners to plan, develop, and design a proposal for changes to Holland Street to improve conditions for bicycle and bus riders.

The Education Team organized an exciting lineup for our highly successful Bike Talk Social Hour series - where once a month we bring great speakers from the bike community to speak at Aeronaut Brewery. They also helped coordinate various activities during the Bike Month Kick-off Event, as well as developed and distributed bicycle safety information to the community like the new SBAC business card featuring quick steps to report a crash.

The Encouragement Team did a fantastic job setting up and tabling at the Bike Month Kick-off Event where we hosted an outstanding panel discussion on car-free cities, and included a special introduction by Congressperson Ayanna Pressley and Mayor Joe Curtatone. The Team organized several bike rides during the year, including Tour de Somerville, and co-hosted the monthly bicycle commuter breakfasts with Whole Foods.

Our Enforcement team coordinated a collective response from a number of local advocacy organizations to recent issues related to rideshare-bicycle conflicts. The response led to multiple meetings with Lyft and Uber to directly advocate for changes to our cities and encourage future partnerships between advocates, city planners, and rideshare companies. The team also met with top SPD brass to highlight a number of key initiatives and obtain funding to secure a bicycle lights to distribute throughout the city.

EDUCATION & ENCOURAGEMENT

The Education team's goal is for people of all ages and abilities to feel confident and safe while biking in the City of Somerville and beyond. Our outreach efforts are aimed at all road users, including bicyclists, drivers, and pedestrians.

The Encouragement team focuses on activities and efforts that celebrate and engage people who currently bike for their commutes, errands, recreation, and fun. We also focus on outreach to members of the community who do not currently consider bike riding as a viable option for their travels around Somerville and the surrounding area.

For 2019, we joined our forces and pooled our meetings. By taking this step, we acknowledged the tight linkage of

education and encouragement and became more efficient in our efforts. We continued the very successful Bike Talk Social Hour, organized bike group rides and local bike events and updated our outreach material to share information about the SBAC and improvements to Somerville's bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. In addition, we started building new collaborations with other local organizations and companies to accelerate the impact of our work.

Our teams worked with several organizations to put on community rides and other events in 2019. All of the rides were supported by the Somerville Police Department, with officers who volunteer to help keep riders safe.



BIKE TALK SOCIAL HOUR

Our monthly Bike Talk Social Hour series began in the fall of 2015 and is still going strong. We finished 2019 with our 54th talk in the series! One Wednesday evening each month, members of the bicycling community gather at Aeronaut Brewery to hear someone from the local, national, or international bike community give a talk on a biking-related topic. Before and after the talk there is plenty of time to hang

out with fellow bike advocates and enthusiasts and discuss our favorite topic- bikes! In 2019 we had international speakers (e.g. Adriaan Kok from the Netherlands who designed the amazing [Hovenring bicycle bridge](#) in Eindhoven), visionary politicians (Cambridge City Councillor Jan Devereux and State Senator Will Brownsberger), transportation engineers (Dr. Peter Furth from Northeastern), and entrepreneurs (e.g. Lauren Hefferon of Ciclismo Classico). See the list above for the 2019 lineup and visit the [Bike Talk](#) section of our web site for more information.



Left: Ken Carlson introduces a Bike Talk; Right, Upper: A crowd turns out at Aeronaut Brewing for a Bike Talk social hour; Right, Lower: A year's worth of Bike Talk social hour posters

Bike Talk Series 2019

January	Jon Ramos	Bos/Treal, Adventure and Advocacy
January	Adriaan Kok	Building Cities for All Modes: Using Synergetic Win-Win Infrastructure
February	Somerville Bike Kitchen	Cooking Up a Bike Kitchen
March	Hudson Doyle	Canada to Colombia by Bicycle
April	Cara Seiderman	Cambridge's Path Towards a Bikeable Future
May	Ken Carlson & Tom Lamar	Changing Gears to Keep Somerville Bicycling Forward
June	Peter Furth	Systematic Safety - What Vision Zero Means in Holland, and What it Should Mean Here
June	Robin Chase	Getting the Mobility Future We Want
July	Carl Larson	How to Make Streets Safer Through Trespassing, Open Containers, and Indecent Exposure: Portland Oregon's Unlikely Advocates
August	Silvia Ascarelli	Biking the East Coast Greenway: A 3000 Mile Route from Maine to Florida
September	Lauren Hefferon	How Bicycle Travel Heals, Inspires, and Transforms
October	Jan Devereux	Reflections on Four Years of Biking at Cambridge City Hall
November	Galen Mook	How I Learned to Stop Kvetching and Love Bike Advocacy
December	Will Brownsberger	The Future of Urban Bicycling



Left: A crowd gathers to hear the panel discussion; Middle: Bike tube jewelry making; Right: Lions of bike activism Vivian Ortiz (L) and Lee Toma (R) at the event

BIKE MONTH KICK-OFF

May is National Bike Month and every year SBAC kicks it off with a giant party at Aeronaut Brewery to celebrate bicycling. This fun event brings together the greater Boston community of bicycle advocates, commuters, and bicycle riders of all levels.

We always have a special speaker in the middle of the Kick Off and this year we had a panel discussion entitled “Car-Free Cities: Evolution or Revolution”. The Panel was moderated by Somerville City Councilor Stephanie Hirsch with an amazing collection of panelists. This time around we had a very special person introduce the panel, our very own Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, joined by Mayor Joe Curtatone.



Bike Month Kick-off Poster



Left: Representative Ayanna Pressley introduces Somerville Mayor Joe Curtatone; Middle, Upper: Bike-friendly businesses and organizations table at the event; Right, Upper: SBAC tables at the event; Middle, Lower: Family fun at the Bike Month kick-off event; Right, Lower: Free bike tune-ups were available

WHOLE FOODS BIKE BREAKFAST

For the last several years, the Somerville Whole Foods located on Beacon Street has hosted a Bike and Pedestrian Commuter Breakfast on the last Friday of the fair-weather months. This year, the breakfasts were held from April to October. During these morning get-togethers, members of the SBAC set up an informational table to connect with commuters. Many of those

who stop to check in are people who happen to be commuting on foot or by bike, and even Somerville Mayor Joe Curtatone stopped by. The breakfast provides a great opportunity to engage with members of the car-free commuting community and to share information about the various infrastructure projects and public events going on in Somerville.



Left: Promotion for a Bike Breakfast; Right, Upper: A warm summer Bike Breakfast; Right, Lower: Bike Committee educational materials at Bike Breakfast

TOUR DE SOMERVILLE

Every year, the Tour de Somerville bike ride highlights some of the hallmarks of the Somerville community and attracts many cyclists. The theme of the 2019 Tour de Somerville was “Bikes and Ice Cream” and designed as a family-friendly ride.

Many kids, parents, and others rode the tour, which led us from Davis Square to East Somerville and finished with ice cream in Powder House Park.



Left: Tour de Somerville poster; Middle: Slogging up the one big hill on the Tour de Somerville; Right: Somerville Police escort the Tour de Somerville



Bike Your City with Bluebikes
 Half-Day Wednesday, Sept. 25th
 2:00-3:00PM

Missed the bus but don't want to be late for school? Try Bluebikes!

Practice biking your city safely by joining a group ride from Somerville High School to Clarendon Hill Busway. If you enjoyed using Bluebikes, sign up for a free annual membership!

Bluebikes cannot be rented to riders under 16. All riders must sign a waiver. If under 18, the waiver must also be signed by a parent or guardian. Bring your own helmet or receive one for free.

Sign up online at www.eventbrite.com/e/70927609389

Logos for Somerville Public Health, Somerville Office of Sustainability, Somerville Planning Dept., and BLUEbikes.

Back to School Ride Poster



Somerville Arts Council & Somerville Bicycle Committee present

Illuminations Bike Ride
 2019

Join us in marveling at Somerville houses and yards decorated with lights and graced with illuminated ornaments - on your bicycle!
 Saturday, December 14, 5:45pm, Somerville City Hall

family friendly & escorted by Somerville Police Department
 bike lights & warm dress required - holiday lights & festive cheer encouraged!
 ride leaves 6 pm, scheduled for 90 minutes
 rain/snow/ice date: Sunday, December 15
 somervillebikes.org | facebook.com/somervillebikes

Illuminations Ride Poster



Riders gather at a construction site on the Historic Bike Ride

BACK TO SCHOOL RIDE

Geared toward students, “Back to School” ride’s goal was to demonstrate a safe and fun cycling route between Somerville High School and Clarendon Hill. Next year, we hope to find creative ways to better publicize the ride and get high school students out on bicycles.

HISTORIC BIKE RIDE

The Historic Bike Ride has a long tradition in Somerville. Co-organized by Brandon Wilson, Executive Director of the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission and her team, the theme of 2019’s ride was “Tracking the T”. This community tour led 50-60 cyclists along existing and future train tracks to a variety of transit sites in Somerville and Medford. Local transit and advocates gave talks at key sites along the route.

ILLUMINATIONS BIKE RIDE

The final community tour of the year is the Illuminations Bike Ride. This annual ride takes participants through the City of Somerville to highlight some of the most festive, impressively decorated, and well-lit homes and businesses during the holidays. Many members of the public join the ride in holiday themed clothes and several even decorate their bikes. It is not uncommon to see bikes covered in flashing holiday lights. This year’s Illuminations Ride attracted a sizeable group, including kids, despite freezing temperatures familiar to the many residents who commute year-round in town – a fitting end to this year’s community rides and events. For the first time, the ride ended in Ball Square where partner stores and restaurants offered anyone coming from the ride discounts and special treats.



Left: Councillor-At-Large Will Mbah contemplates the GLX expansion; Middle: Director of Mobility Brad Rawson joins the Historic Ride; Right: Stopping at the new Assembly Orange Line station for some history



Left: An updated flyer for the SBAC; Middle & Right: SBAC business card with information about what to do in case of a crash

BICYCLE EDUCATION MATERIALS

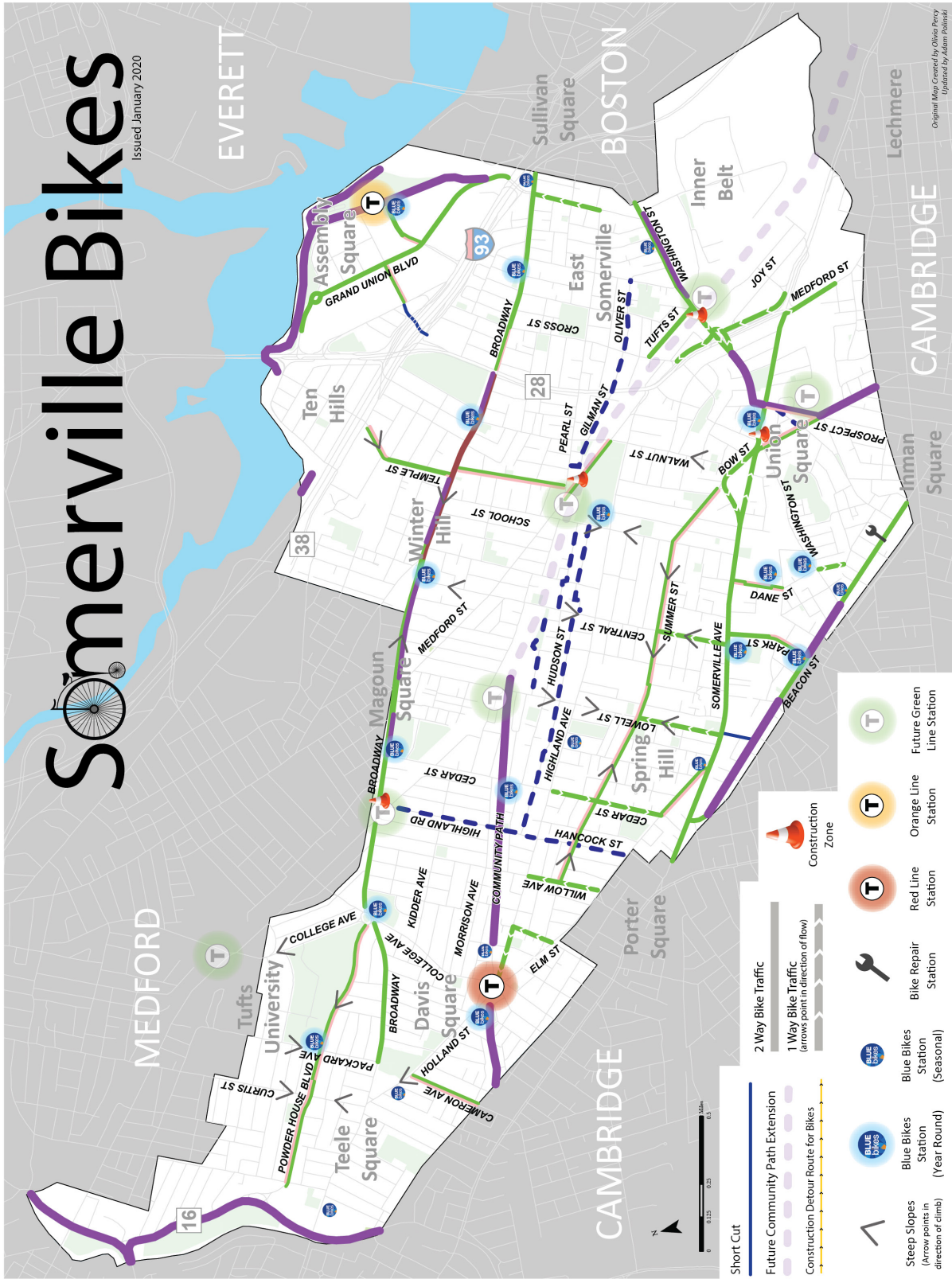
The Education Team strives to develop educational material that can help all road users better navigate our streets. In 2019, we updated some of the material. In 2019, we designed a new SBAC poster that gives a quick overview of our structure and mission during public events. Second, we created SBAC business cards with an overview of our committee on the front, and a checklist of the most important things you as a cyclist need to do when being involved in a crash.

Additionally, the map of bicycle facilities throughout the city was updated as of January 2020.

In 2019, beyond the printed material at events and for handouts, the Education committee explored a new medium – video! The committee has begun working on a public service announcement about how to use bike boxes.

SBAC has partnered with Bluebikes, Metro Boston’s public bike share program, to support some of the community rides by offering free bicycles.

We are happy to report that the bicycle safety training curriculum for 5th graders in Somerville’s public schools is getting a fresh look with some revitalized partnerships in the schools and community. The lessons, once taught in every 5th grade PE class across the district, have recently declined due to several challenges including bikes in need of repairs. In the 2019-2020 school year, the district is planning to trial three different approaches and evaluating its feasibility and effectiveness for continuation into the following school year. Volunteers from SBAC will be repairing the kids’ bikes for the trainings. This is the result of a close collaboration with Shape Up Somerville, Somerville Public Schools and the Broadway Bike School, as well as the help of volunteers from the SBAC.



The latest version of the Somerville Bikes Map, which includes all dedicated bike infrastructure in Somerville as of January 2020

MORE

COMFORT LEVEL

LESS

ENFORCEMENT & SAFETY

The Enforcement & Safety team mission is to ensure safety for all road users, with a particular focus on serving vulnerable road users such as bicyclists and pedestrians. The team's efforts are primarily targeted at enforcing existing laws, regulations, and municipal codes through a variety of initiatives as well as proposing new ones. The team acts as the liaison for and regularly coordinates with the Somerville Police Department (SPD). The team collaborates with the SPD to provide officer coverage for public bicycle rides.

In 2019, the Enforcement team built upon the existing relationships with the SPD, including our relationships with Deputy Chief Stephen Carrabino and Captain Jim Donovan, who served as a crucial contact for the SBAC on enforcement issues. We increased our cross-team collaborations throughout the year as enforcement is closely tied to education and other team initiatives.

RIDESHARE LETTER

In 2018, the SBAC drafted a letter to local rideshare operators highlighting a number of issues that have been discussed at various forums and identifying a series of suggestions that these companies could undertake to ensure safe streets for all, increase accountability for drivers, and build lasting partnerships with municipalities in and around the Boston metro area. We were joined by MassBike, Bike Safe Boston, Green Streets Initiative, Boston Cyclists Union, etc.) who signed onto the letter alongside the Bike Committee.

In Spring 2019, leadership from the various organizations that signed the letter as well as from the Cities of Somerville and Cambridge met with policy representatives from both Lyft and Uber. The representatives spoke about short and long-term plans to address some of the concerns outlined in the letter. Lyft representatives noted that their fleet vehicles, owned by Lyft and leased/rented by drivers, will begin to have warning stickers over the next few months.

A coalition of leading bicycle, pedestrian and transit advocacy organizations in the greater Boston region have drafted this letter to express our concern over the persistent problem of drivers of rideshare vehicles obstructing designated bicycle lanes while in the process of picking up/dropping off their passengers. We are writing you to help develop solutions to this illegal and dangerous practice.

We salute your company's efforts to improve transportation access and build community through ridesharing and more recently through promoting bikeshare, as evidenced by the purchases of Motivate and Jump by Lyft and Uber, respectively. We would hope you agree that safety is paramount for everyone on the road while using your services. Ironically, the common practice of rideshare drivers parking in bike lanes undermines the safety of those bicycling, whether on their own bicycles or on the bikeshare bicycles you provide.

As you know, thousands of people in our communities - from children to senior citizens - bike to school, work, and errands every day. They generally do so in bike lanes when possible, because doing so is safer—when they are not obstructed. The Boston-Metro area municipalities have invested a great deal in the past few years in infrastructure to build accessible and connected networks of bike lanes with the goal of safety for all in mind.

When bike lanes are obstructed by a vehicle, cyclists must ride alongside motor vehicles, where they are unduly exposed to heavy truck, bus, and automobile traffic. Furthermore, obstructed bike lanes increase the danger of bicyclists being hit by an opening car door. Obstructing bicycle lanes is a violation of Massachusetts General Law (Chapter 89 Section 4D), which states :

“The operator of a motor vehicle shall not stand or park the vehicle upon an on-street path or lane designated by an official sign or marking for the exclusive use of bicycles, except in a case of emergency.”

The reason for the Commonwealth's bike lane laws is simple, and intuitive: public safety.

Rideshare drivers regularly violate the bike lane laws throughout the Boston metro region – it happens with maddening frequency, as evidenced by heavy social media documentation and multiple complaints to Police Departments and Parking Control Officers. With the rising popularity of rideshare services, the problem has become even more acute. This practice is giving rideshare companies a bad name.

Excerpt from the letter submitted to the rideshare companies Lyft and Uber

BICYCLE LIGHTS

In 2019, the Enforcement and Safety team had the opportunity to meet with Chief David Fallon to discuss a number of important topics – from future opportunities to collaborate on initiatives, the Chief’s priorities, and key safety initiatives we were interested in. Inspired by MassBike’s distribution of lights to bicyclists, we asked Chief Fallon if he would be able to secure a budget to purchase lights that the SBAC could distribute alongside SPD officers. Chief Fallon allocated funds and asked that the SBAC research potential options and make a recommendation on how to maximize the impact of these funds. We made a recommendation that will help us distribute sets of high quality, re-chargeable lights to as many as 150 bicyclists throughout the city. Unfortunately, the city was unable to submit a purchase order before overseas manufacturing shut down. We’re hopeful that we can submit the purchase order and have the lights ready for fall 2020.



Sample sticker from Lyft

EVALUATION, PLANNING, & ENGINEERING

The mission of the Evaluation Team is to identify, using multiple data streams, including bicycle counts, Committee feedback and others, locations throughout the City in which facilities are needed to improve cyclist safety as well as improve mobility for cyclists, pedestrians and mass transit users.

The Engineering Team’s main task is to make design recommendations to create safe and convenient places to ride and park bicycles. The team reviews bicycle and roadway plans and makes recommendations to the City. To do so, the team members must stay up to date on cutting edge bike facilities and infrastructure to make sure Somerville is leading the way in innovative bike facilities.

Our 2019 projects included the following:

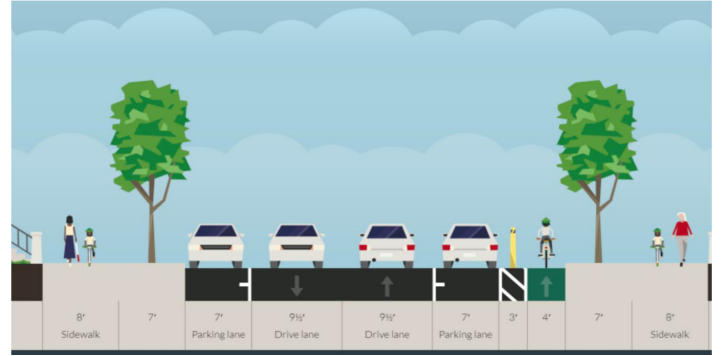
- **Review of the Bus/Bicycle Lanes on Broadway**
- **Review of Community Path Extension widths and connections to Grand Junction Path with recommendations to the city and GLX team**
- **Proposed designs and review of the City of Somerville design options for Powder House Boulevard**
- **Proposed design of improved bicycle and pedestrian crossing in the Powder House Boulevard Roundabout**
- **Recommendations after review of Powder House Boulevard / Route 16 intersection as part of the Clarendon Hill Redevelopment Project**
- **Recommendation to fund professional development of the Somerville Bicycle Facility Network Plan**
- **Planning and call for additional Neighborway Signage**
- **Proposed design, review of, and coordination of MAPC-sponsored parking study of Holland Street**
- **Recommendation of painted bicycle lane markings on Cameron Avenue**
- **Proposed design for connecting the bi-directional cycleway on Gore St in Cambridge with the single direction protected bike lanes on Medford St in Somerville**

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: POWDER HOUSE BOULEVARD

The Engineering and Evaluation teams were instrumental in developing quick-build concepts for a safer Powder House. The Engineering team developed and proposed two different concepts evaluating the safest conditions under different sets of assumptions, including partial parking removal, and a bidirectional cycletrack or making the street one way. Members of the teams, along with full SBAC committees and Somerville residents then devoted many hours to neighborhood outreach. The committees then continued the project, studying on-street and off-street parking availability and additional community outreach. After the City, in consultation with a professional design firm, put forth five proposed concepts members of the Committee reviewed the designs and made recommendations in concert with the ongoing public process. City staff prioritized an interim design in 2019, including traffic calming measures, with the final completion scheduled for late 2020.



Powder House Blvd options presented at a May 22, 2019 community meeting

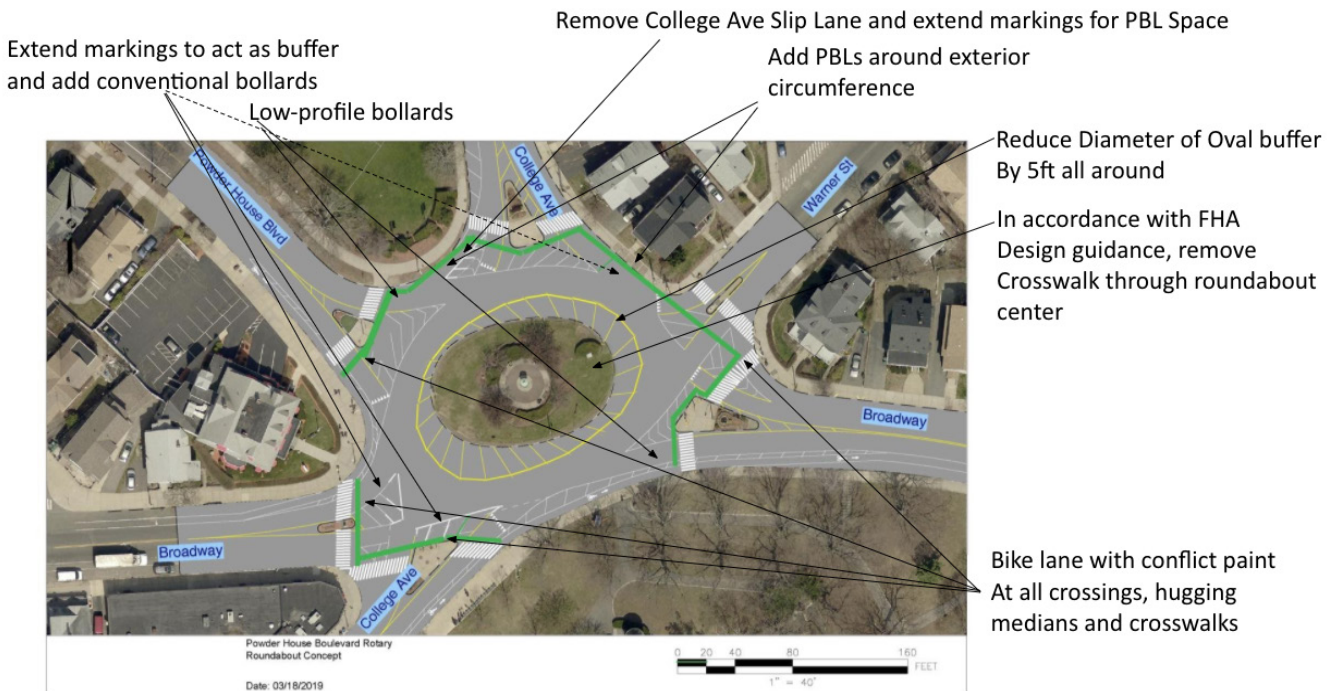


Option "E" recommended by SBAC

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: POWDER HOUSE ROTARY

The City of Somerville has planned intermodal facility improvements to the Powder House Boulevard rotary in concert with street improvements. The rotary has unique design challenges. The Committee took on these challenges and created several concepts for improved facilities when asked to by City staff. The original plan reduced the rotary to a single lane of traffic, but had no bicycle facilities. The Engineering and Evaluation teams designed safety improvements to the Rotary given within national guidelines for pedestrian and cycling

facilities approaching and while transiting through rotaries and in accordance with project specifications/scope described by the City. Through several sessions, the Committees' design was honed and presented to City Staff and the contracted design firm for improvements to the rotary. City staff report that a number of the Committees' recommendations were incorporated in the official design. Final design work and implementation is expected in 2020.

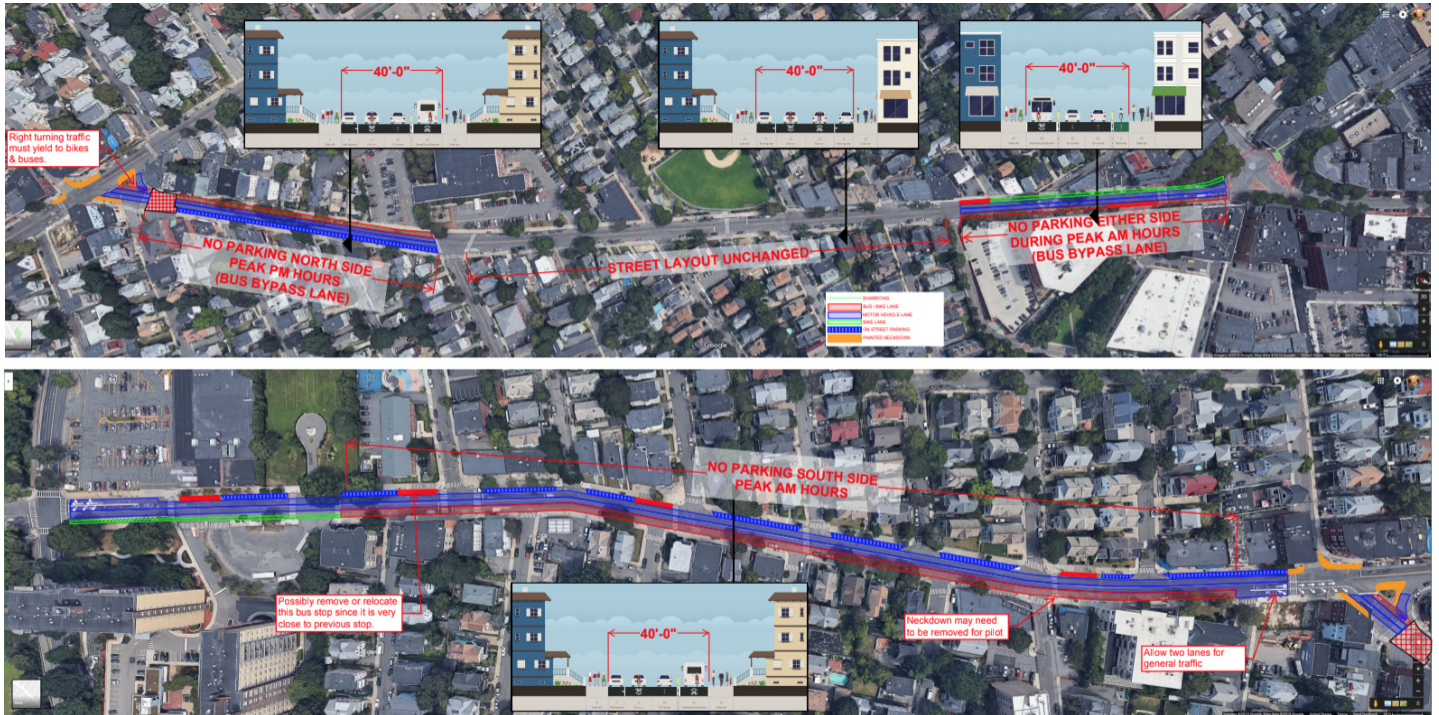


SBAC Engineering Team's April 2019 Recommendations for Powder House Circle

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: HOLLAND STREET

The Engineering and Evaluation teams have worked with Community members, City Councilors and City staff to propose design recommendations for improved bicycle facilities on Holland Street given its near-term repaving based upon the City of Somerville repaving schedule. The Committee analyzed multiple factors including MBTA bus timings for routes with stops from Clarendon Hill through Davis Square, timing of motor vehicle congestion, bicycle counts and usage, local businesses in the project corridor and scenarios with different levels of parking reallocation. Several proposed designs were created based upon these factors and ultimately the bus-

bicycle lane was proposed and fully developed to improve facilities for cyclists as well as bus passengers, a large mode of transit along Holland street. Through the design process, the Committees recognized the deep importance of having the best available data to measure business impact and parking. Through the Community and local advocates, an opportunity to request a Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)-funded professional parking study of the street and made City Staff aware of this opportunity. The City Staff elected to pursue this opportunity and initiated the parking study. This data was then used to help create official City designs, which incorporate the bus-bicycle lane concept. The public process is ongoing and implementation is planned for 2020.



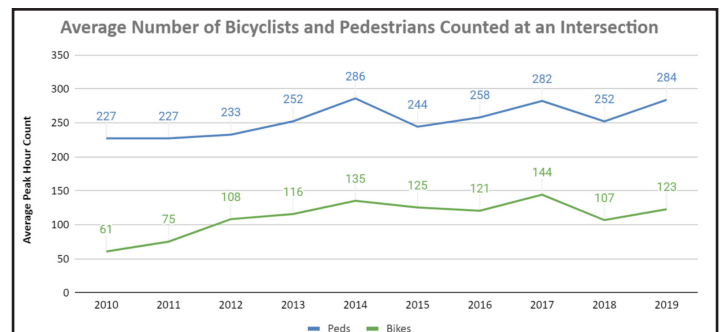
Holland Street layout with temporal bus lanes as recommended by the SBAC

LOOKING AHEAD

The Engineering and Evaluation Teams have an exciting slate of projects from quick build projects that would expand existing contraflow streets, to quick build projects based upon Community feedback and needs assessments. The Committees are also working on plans synchronized with upcoming major City construction projects including Spring Hill and additional proposed designs for markings-level projects on Elm Street, in concert with efforts to improve bicycle network facilities.

Over 40 members of the Somerville community, including almost all members of the bicycle committee, helped the city’s staff with the annual bicycle and pedestrian counts at the beginning of October. The counts show an increase in both bicycle and pedestrian counts over 2018, but behind the peak in 2017. The Engineering and Evaluation Teams continue to focus on finding ways to increase bicycle mode share in the city through better streetscape facilities for bicycles.

2019 has also be a year of learning for the Committees into how to best implement and progress projects using the Champion model. Lessons learned have included development of new metrics to measure success and improved communication with City staff through recurring update meetings.



Somerville Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Summary, 2010-2019

Priorities For 2020

GOALS

OVERALL COMMITTEE GOALS

- Collaborating with similarly interested committees and interest groups: Somerville Vision Zero Committee, Better Bus Project, Somerville Pedestrian and Transit Committee and more
- Continue to promote safe cycling and encourage cycling as a means of mobility through events, activism and content
- Assist the city in implementing forward-thinking mobility solutions involving cyclists
- Partner with the city in promoting safe cycling as a low environmental impact mobility solution as part of Somervision 2040 goals

EDUCATION & ENCOURAGEMENT TEAM GOALS

- Deepen community engagement across a wide variety of residents
- Develop additional educational resources to be shared with bicyclists and non-bicyclists
- Expand outreach and education programs (more rides!)

ENFORCEMENT TEAM GOALS

- Continue to build strong relationship with SPD officers and leaders
- Identify additional safety initiatives (bike lights, helmets, etc.)
- Collaborate with other teams and advocates on potential legislative changes

ENGINEERING, EVALUATION, & PLANNING TEAM GOALS

- Advise and identify plans for near-term projects like Powder House and Spring Hill
- Identify and propose opportunities to improve intermodal facilities that facilitate social distancing, particularly around essential businesses in partnership with the City, Community and other advisory committees
- Develop our own priority list of projects that are aligned with City rubrics and will do what we can to facilitate improvements where needs exist, such as Elm Street and our Quick Build list

PROJECTS

GILMAN SQUARE PLAN

Due to the GLX project, Gilman Square is getting a redesign that includes updates to streetscapes. A community process and proposed conceptual design will be completed in 2020.

SPRING HILL SEWER SEPARATION PLAN

The Spring Hill Sewer Plan is a comprehensive utility plan that also allows for street redesign for greater overall mobility and safety. The city is evaluating several options for bus and/or bike lanes.

DAVIS SQUARE REDESIGN: HOLLAND ST & COLLEGE AVE

Somerville is planning to resurface the sidewalks and redo the streetscape for Holland St and College Ave. Prioritizing the movement of people, the city is exploring mobility solutions. The bike committee plans to help the city provide sustainable transit options that are safe for all road users.

How to Get Involved in the Bicycle Committee

ATTEND OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Members of the public are welcomed to attend the monthly committee meetings, which take place on the first Thursday of the month from 6:30-8:00 p.m at the Academy Room in the Public Safety Building, 220 Washington St. The meetings cover a variety of topics important to bike safety, education, policy, and infrastructure. Agendas are posted on the Bicycle Committee Facebook page and on the [Bicycle Committee web page](#).

JOIN THE COMMITTEE

Members of the public can become members of the Bicycle Committee if there are open positions. To become a member, the interested candidate generally needs to attend six meetings, get involved in a team, and demonstrate active interest in improving the state of bicycle transportation in Somerville.

JOIN A TEAM

A very simple way to get involved is to join one of the five teams that are organized around the “Five E’s” of bicycle advocacy and planning.

- **Education & Encouragement** - Focused on educating all road users with respect to bike safety and encouraging everyone to bike through organizing events and activities
- **Enforcement** - Coordinating with the Somerville Police Department and others to propose and enforce existing bicycle related laws
- **Engineering, Evaluation, & Planning** - Focused on providing detailed engineering solutions to our make our streets more bike friendly and evaluating existing bicycle conditions while proposing new ideas

Our teams meet in between the monthly Bicycle Committee meetings. If you are interested in joining a team, come to a monthly meeting and express interest, or send an email to info@somervillebikes.org.

VOLUNTEER

If you are interested in volunteering with any of our events or rides, let us know by emailing info@somervillebikes.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit us at our monthly bike breakfasts - Held at Whole Foods on Beacon Street, the last Friday of the month from April to October
- Visit our website - somervillebikes.org
- Email us - [Info@somervillebikes.org](mailto:info@somervillebikes.org)
- Subscribe to our [Monthly Newsletter](#)
- Like us on Facebook - [Somerville Bicycle Committee](#)
- Follow us on Twitter - [@Somervillebike](#)
- Follow us on Instagram - [@Somervillebike](#)