

WalkBike Springfield

Residents working to improve the safety of walking and bicycling in Springfield

April 13, 2021

Commissioner Cheryl C. Clapprood
Springfield Police Department
130 Pearl Street
Springfield, MA 01105

Dear Commissioner Clapprood,

WalkBike Springfield has been following the continuous record of pedestrians and cyclists being killed in vehicular crashes. We are asking to work cooperatively with the Springfield Police to help identify the circumstances and contributing factors resulting in these deaths. Understanding what happened is a first step to improving the safety of our streets.

We, WalkBike Springfield, are a group of residents, 100 strong, who first came together seven years ago working with the goal of improving the safety of walking and bicycling in Springfield. We were front and center in establishing Springfield's Complete Streets Implementation Plan. Thru that effort we have developed a cooperative relationship with the DPW and continue to work with them to identify opportunities in regular paving/maintenance projects to improve our roads for all users. We also work with Springfield Parks Department in recommending and advising best practices for shared-used paths and the development of the new Wheels Park.

While our primary focus is Springfield, our work extends regionally for bike/ped issues thru the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and MassBike CTRV to neighboring communities and statewide through collaboration with MassBike and WalkBoston. We are involved with the Complete Streets Demonstration Days and campaigned for the 25mph default speed limit in Springfield. To that end, we are very proud of our "25 Saves Lives" campaign where we post yard signs on such streets to slow traffic. For more about our activities, see our website at www.walkbikespringfieldma.org.

The Chicopee Police called upon WalkBike Springfield to assist in a reenactment of the fatal crash that killed a cyclist in 2019. During this reenactment we learned what the circumstances were around that crash and the CPD learned how much time the cyclist would have been visible to the driver before she was run over. This assisted them in deciding what if any charges to bring against the driver.

We would like to be part of the solution for Springfield Police as well. By our gaining an understanding of the circumstances around each crash, we would be able to research and assess what, if any, physical changes such as traffic calming measures, intersection redesign, lighting upgrades, etc. would increase safety and recommend beneficial infrastructure changes to the City.

Our goal is to work together with you to make our streets safer for all: pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. We look forward to meeting with you to hopefully establish processes that will help us all better our City.

We look forward to hearing from you when we can meet.

Sincerely,

Betsy Johnson
For WalkBike Springfield
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www.walkbikespringfieldma.org

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