



Department of Transportation

## Traffic Engineering and Parking Divisions

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March 16, 2016

To: Pedestrian/Bike/Motor Vehicle Commission

From: Steve Meiers, Safety Educator

Re: Report of Responsibilities

I am happy to explain what I do in my position.

I will start with activities that are a minor portion of my job and build up to activities that are a more central part of what I do.

**Adapted Cycling:** Some people have physical limitations which prevent them from riding a standard bicycle. People who have issues with balance, such as some with MS, can ride a tricycle instead of a standard two wheel bike. Those who can't use their legs can use a hand powered cycle.

I have been working with the Madison Spinal Cord Injury group and the UW Department of Kinesiology adaptive fitness program to make people aware of these options. Project Mobility is a suburban Chicago group that promotes adaptive cycling. They bring a trailer full of equipment for people to try at Ride the Drive and the Disability Pride Festival. This year they will be having a free standing event in the fall. My role has been minimal- just helping with some of the logistics and sending out a few flyers to promote the event.

**Learn to Ride:** When I run into kids who don't know how to ride a bike I try to help them learn if I have time. A few years ago I heard of a program in suburban Milwaukee where the local police department had a Learn to Ride program at a park. After hearing about this effort I did a pilot program at an elementary school which was very successful. After discussing the program with people from the Madison School Community Rec Department, they agreed to take over the sessions. They hold two sessions in the spring which are very popular. My role now is just to help on the day of the events.

**Pedestrian Safety:** I do a program with kindergarten and 1st grade students on how to cross the street safely. This involves a short video and discussion followed by a walk in the neighborhood where kids practice safe crossing. Typically I do this with 4 or 5 schools annually.

**School based bike programs:** These are targeted toward 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes. This involves a 30 minute classroom discussion using an interactive display. A 30 minute session on the playground using bikes and helmets I bring, follows. Typically I get to 10-12 schools in the spring, about 25% of the potential schools.

**Bike Clubs:** The best way to learn how to ride on the streets and sidewalks is to actually ride on the streets and sidewalks. I work with after school and summer camp programs to take youth, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and older, on regular rides to learn how to ride safely. Think of it as the two wheeled equivalent of behind the wheel drivers ed. My schedule is always full with 5 sessions during the school year and 9 during the summer.

**Neighborhood bike repair:** A neighborhood activist in the Darbo Worthington neighborhood started a monthly bike repair session a few years ago and I helped him find funds for parts. He has since moved and this summer I am taking over the logistics of the operation, reminding the volunteers, helping with outreach and so forth. The program at Darbo was very successful and I tried to expand it to other neighborhood last year. This effort met with mixed results. I currently support a great group of volunteers who provide regular programs in the Theresa Terrace and Meadowood neighborhoods.

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**Equity:** A few years ago Mayor Soglin was describing to a reporter the cities' efforts to examine how its policies and programs affect people of color. He noted that the City just put millions of dollars into the Cannonball Bike Path Bridge. " We put all that money into bicycles. But 30 percent of our population is Latino, African American and Asian, and when you look at who is using our bicycle routes, those proportions don't hold up. " he said.

This winter I talked with 9 people who could give me insights as to why so few people of color ride bikes. We were able to identify some very clear issues as well as issues that need to be explored more thoroughly.

Hopefully I can share these findings with you at the meeting.

Thank you for your interest.