

Campaign Objectives

1. Help raise awareness of the NJ Safe Passing Law and bicyclist/pedestrian safety in general among residents, law enforcement and municipal leaders.
2. Help achieve safety improvements by encouraging safe driving among motorists and cyclists, electronic sign messaging, bike lanes, pothole repairs, debris removal, etc.
3. Garner publicity for the club to help recruit new members.
4. Expand existing and create new relationships and potential sponsorships with bike shops and others.

Key Campaign Elements

1. Send a form JSTS signed by local resident club members to the mayors and police chiefs about the law and Safe Streets program grants and to offer assistance in getting information out to local residents.
2. Club members speak before their town council about the law and to encourage their towns to take steps to help improve cyclist/pedestrian safety. (Consider incentivizing club members to participate.) If possible, club members can be accompanied by representatives from safety advocacy organizations such as EZ Rides.
3. Issue a press release regarding our campaign, the law and general bike safety tips.
4. Longer-term partner with other organizations such as EZ Rides, NJBWC and local bike shops to create a program on bike maintenance and safety to be offered to adults and children through township recreation departments, Night Out events, festivals, bike shops, etc.

Important Considerations

1. To assure a successful campaign, we should spread our activities over a year or more.
2. Start small, test, refine and build.
3. If we fail to practice what we preach, we may face negative publicity.

Steps

1. Draft the letter to mayors and police chiefs, press release about our campaign and safety tips, and talking points for members.
2. Recruit members to send letters and speak before local town council meetings.
3. Issue the press release prior to the start of National Bike Month in May.
4. Members send letters and speak before local town council meetings.

TALKING POINTS

I live at xxxxxxxxxxx and have been a resident of the town for xx years.

I also am an avid bicyclist and a member of the Jersey Shore Touring Society, one of the largest bike clubs in the state.

Observations

1. Some bicyclists ride on the wrong side of the road.
2. Motorists continue to act as though they own the road, and they are not aware of or follow New Jersey's Safe Passing Law.
3. There are many hazardous potholes and pieces of debris on the roadways.
4. There are (no, few or not enough)* bike lanes in town.

5. (The speaker should add other observations that may be pertinent to his/her community. For example, in some Shore towns, teenagers frequently ride their bikes in large groups down the center of our busy roadways, especially during the summertime.)*

*Each speaker should tailor the statements to the situation in his/her community.

Recommendations

Before someone else is unnecessarily injured or killed, my fellow cyclists and I strongly urge you to take action. We suggest that the town:

- Use electronic signage to convey information about the Safe Passing Law;
- Install road signs instructing motorists to move over 4 feet, where appropriate. Guidance for these and other bicycle safety signs can be found in the new version of the “Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways” from the Federal Highway Administration;
- Post information on road user safety, including the Safe Passing Law, on municipal websites and convey through other existing communication channels to local residents. Links to videos from various road safety organizations such as EZ Ride on the safe passing law, riding too close to parked vehicles and other safety-related issues can be included; and
- Consider the creation of a comprehensive safety action plan that identifies the most significant roadway safety concerns in our community, including bicyclist safety. The cost of developing and implementing this plan may be paid for through a U.S. Department of Transportation Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant. Monmouth County has been awarded a grant in partnership with Bradley Beach, Highlands and Holmdel.

JSTS would like to help the town educate residents on safe cycling. Among other things, our members, along with representatives from EZ Rides and local bike shops, can work with the town’s recreation department to help create and run an annual community bike ride. During this event, or existing community fair and festivals, Night Out and other events, we can conduct free bicycle safety checks and provide safety-related information.

I hope you will give this issue some serious thought.

Please let me know how I and my bike club can help.

LETTER TO OFFICIALS

Dear Mayor (or Police Chief):

I am a resident of [xxxxxxx], and like many of our neighbors enjoy riding a bicycle throughout our town and county. No doubt, with the warmer weather approaching, motorists will be sharing the local roads with many more adults and children who will be cycling, jogging and walking. And out of an abundance of caution, I am writing to you as a local resident and an active member of the Jersey Shore Touring Society (JSTS), one of the largest bike clubs in the state, to share some observations and thoughts on how we can make the roads safer for everyone – as well as to offer some assistance.

Unfortunately, as we all have observed, too many motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians do not know all the rules of the road or chose to ignore some of them. For example, two years after its implementation, many motorists are not aware of New Jersey's Safe Passing Law, which requires them to change lanes or pass at least four feet away from bicyclists and pedestrians, and if not possible, to reduce their vehicle's speed to 25 mph and be prepared to stop until they can pass non-motorists safely. In other cases, bicyclists ride on the wrong side of the road. [And especially during the warmer weather, large groups of teenagers frequently ride their bikes down the middle of the road in front of vehicular traffic.]*

Before someone else is injured or killed, my fellow cyclists and I strongly urge you to take action. We suggest that that the town:

- Uses electronic signage to convey information about the Safe Passing Law;
- Installs road signs instructing motorists to move over 4 feet, where appropriate. Guidance for these and other bicycle safety signs can be found in the new version of the "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways" from the Federal Highway Administration;
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If you would like to discuss this issue, please feel free to contact me at xxxxxxxx. I appreciate your time, concern and understanding.

Sincerely,

*Add this language only if appropriate for the member's town. Or substitute another local-related bike safety concern.

PRESS RELEASE DRAFT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONMOUTH COUNTY, NJ, APRIL, xx, 2024—The Jersey Shore Touring Society (JSTS) will kick off National Bike Month (May) by launching a bicycle safety advocacy campaign throughout the greater Monmouth County area.

“Our members are speaking to their municipal leaders about the need to emphasize bike safety in their communities. And as a club, we are trying to help get the message out to motorists, cyclists and pedestrians that we all need to better share the road before someone else is seriously injured or worse,” said JSTS President Pat Perrella. “Two years after its implementation, many motorists are not aware of New Jersey’s Safe Passing Law. The law requires them to change lanes or pass at least four feet away from bicyclists and pedestrians, and if not possible, to reduce their vehicle’s speed to 25 mph and be prepared to stop until they can pass non-motorists safely. Some bicyclists continue to ride on the wrong side of the road. Especially during the warmer weather, large groups of teenagers frequently ride their bikes down the middle of the road in front of vehicular traffic.”

As part of its campaign, JSTS is reminding bicyclists that they are required to obey all New Jersey traffic laws, including observing stop signs, red lights, one-way roads, and pedestrian crossings. JSTS also is advising cyclists to always ride defensively and in a predictable manner along the righthand shoulder. They should watch out for careless drivers, stop and look both ways at intersections and traffic lights, and use hand signals when turning. If cycling in a group, it is important to ride in a single file.

In addition, the club encourages anyone who rides a bike on the road to:

- Install a white light on the handlebars and a red light on the rear of the bike so you are visible to drivers, other cyclists and pedestrians. Make sure both lights are fully charged before each ride.
- Carry a basic multi-tool (including Allen keys), a spare tire tube, tire levers, patch kit, and pump or CO₂ cartridge.
- Make sure your bike is in good working condition before every ride. Check the condition of tires, brakes and cables. Inflate tires to a pressure level suitable for your bike, weight and ride. If you have any doubts about the condition of your bike, do not ride it and take it to a bike shop.
- Wear clothing that makes you easily visible and a properly fitting CPSC-approved bicycle helmet. Although New Jersey only requires anyone under 17 years of age to wear a helmet on a bicycle, all adults are advised to do the same to help prevent serious injury.
- Carry personal identification and emergency medical and contact information, preferably not in a bike bag but on a wristband, shoe tag or sticker placed inside your helmet. Also, make sure to bring a cell phone.

For more information on bicycle safety, xxxxxxxxxxxx.

The Jersey Shore Touring Society one of the largest and most active cycling clubs in New Jersey. Founded in 1981, the 350-member club offers a variety of regularly scheduled and seasonal road cycling and mountain biking rides throughout the year in Monmouth and Ocean counties. JSTS’s primary focus is on social rather than competitive riding, and as such, often combines events such as picnics and ice cream stops with rides. In addition, the club promotes safe riding through training programs and pre-ride messages for members, as well as community outreach. More information on the club is available at www.jsts.us.

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