

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Salem Bicycling Advisory Committee**

Wednesday, May 4, 2022 | 6:30 p.m.

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, City Hall Annex, 98 Washington Street  
And Remote Access

**Members Present:** John Wathne (Chair), Michael Williamson, Eric Papetti, Alex Maranto, Colleen Downie, Josh Gillis

**Members Absent:** Jayne O'Leary, Michael Jaros, Matt Caruso, Connor Ryan

**Also Present:** Tom Devine, Senior Planner

#### **Call Meeting to Order**

Wathne called the meeting to order.

#### **Public Comment**

Wathne opens the meeting to public comment and there are none.

#### **Staff Update**

Devine provides the following updates:

- The City has conducted car speed and volume monitoring at the Liberty Hill Ave, and North Street intersection in order to have a baseline to compare data once the pilot project is deployed.
- The Federal Street traffic calming proposal has been presented to the Traffic & Parking Commission and there has been further communication with the neighborhood. Papetti says the city only received light feedback on two proposals for other neighborhoods, but there has been impassioned feedback opposed to the Federal Street contraflow bike lanes as well as in some instances the other traffic calming elements. Papetti suggests that the contraflow lane is unlikely unless there is different feedback to the right people, so proponents should speak up. Some believe it would be unsafe and not meet engineering standards. There has been discussion too about the Monroe Street intersection. Staff will take all the feedback and develop a design.
- Williamson continues to work to get Google to add bike facilities to Google Maps and is having piecemeal success, including the addition of the full Canal Street path.
- The North Street connection study evaluating path alignments over the river and through the underpass is ongoing. The Bike Committee will see some concepts as they are developed.

- The MBTA/City Crescent Lot redevelopment that includes a critical path connection may be at the Planning Board June 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- The North Shore CDC El Centro project at Derby and Lafayette Street has technical work going on behind the scenes. It is on May 25 DRB agenda and may appear on May 19 Planning Board agenda. Devine will make sure Committee has plans. The group approves of Wathne reviewing and providing a letter of comment for both projects.
- The Bike Committee has expressed interest in reconvening a group to discuss snow removal. The group suggests DPW staff should be invited to a Committee meeting.

Devine asks the group if they wish to continue meeting in hybrid format or stay remote until the suspension of the Open Meeting Law expires. The group wishes to continue meeting hybrid.

### **Bluebikes Bikeshare Program Data & Promotion**

*Document referenced: Salem Bluebikes Data, Through 4/30/2022*

Devine presents data for April. Ridership has begun to pick up as the system emerges from winter. Rides per bike per day is a little behind Everett and Revere but ahead of Chelsea, while systemwide ridership is very high. The group asks for additional data showing rides per capita. Wathne is interested in seeing ride distance data as well. Maranto notes that the bikeshare would be used more if neighboring communities had stations. Downie states that there is a time limit to riding.

Devine reports that a Salem State intern made a very effective video about how to use the Bluebikes system and it is circulating on social media. The April Pedal Through Salem scavenger hunt was a success with 40 day passes distributed. And there were more requests of passes than the city could fulfill. Blue Cross is doing Miles for Mental Health with free rides on Mondays in May. There will likely be further promotion when the system expands. Devine is also promoting the 50% annual membership for City employees.

Devine provides an update regarding the upcoming system expansion. Station locations were informed by guidance from Bluebikes, resident requests, and the Mayor's priorities for system coverage. There will be a station in new protected space created by the North Street project at Liberty Hill Ave. A station will also be added to the MBTA crescent lot that will serve people coming from the north until the lot is redeveloped with the improved connection to downtown. Additional locations include Forest River Park, Salem State North Campus, Community Life Center, Goodhue and Grove Street, and Dalton Parkway. Devine is confident about funding for these seven stations for July. There is also a pending state grant application that could cover the cost of three more stations as soon as October. Maranto suggests Collins Cove for a location. Devine says it would be considered if we get the additional state grant. Vinnin Square could also be

a priority if the state funding comes through. Wathne will approach Vinnin Square businesses to see if one would be willing to host or sponsor a station.

Caroline Nye of 5 Shore Ave. comments on the Bluebikes program. She says she likes using Bluebikes even though she owns her own. She lives by Forest River Park and needs to go to Leach Street or Salem State to get a bike, and often there are none at Leach Street. She notes that the expansion includes Forest River Park. She asks if the data shows how much of the ridership is Salem residents. She observes that visitors use them more. She asks if Winter Island is under consideration for a station.

Devine says there are no plans at this time for a Winter Island station. He says there will never be perfect coverage due to the cost. The expansion will result in 15 stations this summer and 3 more as soon as the fall with as many as 110 bikes and Devine doesn't think the city could sustain a system larger than that. As the system is expanded, some stations may not be utilized as much as hoped, and could be moved to places such as Winter Island.

Nye asks if the purpose of the system is to serve visitors rather than residents and describes the challenge of using a bike for an errand. Devine says the current system is small and leaves a lot of areas out. He says he is biased as a Salem resident himself and wants the system to serve residents. He says, however, that like many things in Salem, the city might not be able to sustain a bike share without the tourists who use it. We wouldn't have as many restaurants for residents to enjoy if we didn't have the tourism to prop them up. Devine views the bike share as primarily for people who live and work in Salem, but it depends on tourists and the Salem State community to sustain it. And even if tourists and Salem State student continue to be the largest user groups, it benefits locals by keeping some tourists from driving and congesting our streets with traffic and taking up parking. He hopes that helps make the city livable for people who are here all year. Nye says she hopes to find a happy medium for visitors and residents.

Gillis asks if stations can be piloted in locations to see if that works. Devine says the previous Zagster program had great flexibility for that, but it is more costly to move a Bluebikes station. The city may need to relocate a station if a location just doesn't work, but it has to locate stations in places it does expect will work.

## **Project Prioritization List**

*Document reviewed: Prioritization of small projects, shared Google Sheet, retrieved 5/4/2022*

Devine shares the table and reports that he had tallied the ranking from several members to see which projects rise to the top for the Committee to advocate for. Wathne and Downie will draft a letter summarizing the priorities.

## **Bike Committee Webpage Update**

Devine displays the Bike Committee webpage and highlights what he proposes for edits. Devine proposes new text describing the Committee. Williamson suggests it should explain how other users benefit from projects the Committee advocates for. Wathne says the Committee's name doesn't capture all the benefits of the group's work to non-cyclists. Downie suggests noting benefits to neighbors and the environment. Wathne suggests including an updated map. Devine will make the updates to the webpage and take further input for further edits.

### **Clean Up Day – May 14**

The group discusses the logistics of gathering to clean up a path. Gillis did an impromptu clean up with his daughter to help her log community service hours. The group agrees to meet at 10:00 A.M. May 14 at the Collins Cove path.

### **Salem Arts Festival**

*Document presented: Bike Art @ Salem Arts Festival, 5/4/2022, slides presented by Colleen Downie*

Downie presents possibilities for bike related art at the June 4-5 Salem Arts Festival. She describes goals to engage, educate, excite, and encourage the public and provides examples of types of art. The group is supportive of Downie's efforts and encourages her to continue exploring.

### **Meeting Minutes**

Williamson motions and Gillis seconds to approve the 2/2/2022 minutes and all vote in favor.

### **Adjourn**

Gillis motions and Williamson seconds to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. and all vote in favor.

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Approved by the Bicycling Advisory Committee on August 3, 2022.