

Meeting Minutes

Salem Bicycling Advisory Committee

Wednesday, March 2, 2022 | 6:30 p.m.

Remote Meeting

Members Present: John Wathne (Chair), Michael Williamson, Josh Gillis, Jayne O’Leary, Connor Ryan, Matt Caruso, Eric Papetti, Alex Maranto, Michael Jaros

Members Absent: Colleen Downie

Also Present: Tom Devine, Senior Planner

Call Meeting to Order

Wathne called the meeting to order. Devine describes the remote meeting format and procedure for providing public comment.

Public Comment

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

Staff Update

Documents reviewed: City of Salem Public Snow Removal Map, retrieved 3/2/2022 from salemma.maps.arcgis.com.

Devine provides the following updates:

- North Street: National Grid began their gas main replacement last week and work will take several weeks. When National Grid is out of the way, the City will collect traffic speed and volume data in the project area and deploy the Liberty Hill Ave. intersection pilot project and make observations. The City is awaiting word on a Shared Streets Grant for this project. In response to the Chair’s letter regarding the segment of North Street that will have conventional bike lanes, the City will commission an evaluation of alternatives to bring it off street after the project is completed. Papetti suggests the City purchase or lease off-street parking to offset those that are lost. Caruso suggests using ARPA finds.
- John Wathne is advocating for removing bollards from the first Lead Mills bridge.
- Devine passes on DPW’s snow removal plan to follow up on a previous Bike Committee discussion. They hit main roads first, then secondary roads and high priority sidewalks and paths. Other paths follow. The intensity and frequency of storms is a factor and it has been a challenge to find enough people to operate equipment. However, they do have the equipment needed to clear roads,

sidewalks, and paths. They have ATVs with plows and a sidewalk clearing machine. The City is seeking grant funding for additional equipment, but it doesn't guarantee that there will be enough people to operate it. Williamson states that there is a gap in plowing between Andrew Street and the Collins Cove Path and a City plowing priority map doesn't show the new section of that path. Papetti states that the Bike Committee, Traffic and Parking Commission, and Commission on Disabilities met jointly to discuss snow removal prior to the pandemic. Several City Councilors attended. Papetti believes there was a consensus to work for better snow removal all around and he feels that DPW has not followed up. The Committee suggests a working group with members of the Bike Committee, Traffic & Parking Commission, and Disabilities Commission. O'Leary and Caruso are interested in serving on such a group. Williamson shares the City's snow removal map.

- Members of boards and commissions are required to complete the online conflict of interest training and provide Devine with their certificate.

Bluebikes Bikeshare Program Data & Promotion

Document reviewed: Salem Bluebikes data through 2/24/2022.

Devine presents data for February. Ridership is low, even compared to several peer communities in the system. The group discusses the membership numbers for people with a Salem zip code.

Devine reports that Salem City employees, including police, fire, schools, are entitled to a 50% discount on the annual membership. The Pedal Through Salem scavenger hunt that Park & Recreation Staff is coordinating will use some free day passes for participants and as prizes. There is a Salem State bike fair on March 31 and Devine will provide details to the group. Devine also reports that wayfinding maps are going to be placed on some of the sign panels at some of the Bluebikes stations.

Caruso suggests members of the committee could hand out printed material at the train station to promote Bluebikes. Devine will request materials from Bluebikes. Williamson suggests that the Bike Committee should participate in the next clean up day to clean up bike paths. Several members are interested and Williamson volunteers to lead the effort. The group will discuss at the next meeting.

Prioritization of Small Projects

Document Reviewed: Small Projects Prioritization shared spreadsheet, retrieved 3/2/2022.

Devine shares the document and describes it. Wathne suggests adding the project to bring the North Street lanes completely off street and storage lockers at parks such as Winter Island. Williamson suggests adding bike racks to the list. Caruso suggests adding a safety column to the table. Caruso also suggests adding the project to improve

bike connections through the Canal/Mill/Washington St. intersection. The group discusses safety rankings for the projects. The group also discusses Salem Woods path improvements and a Fort Ave. connection to downtown. Gillis suggests the Ocean Ave. connection over the train tracks between Canal Street and Jefferson Ave. Williamson notes that the proposed South Salem train station would include a pedestrian connection in this area.

Devine will share the spreadsheet for members to add and rank projects.

Local and State Bike Legislation Update

Devine reports that two e-bike items are going through the state legislature. House Bill 3457 is before the Joint Transportation Committee and would legalize and formalize e-bikes in the state. It would allow the City to have e-bikes as part of its bike share with no legal reservations. There was a public hearing and it will remain in committee until April 1. City Council had passed a home rule petition asking to carve out legalization of e-bikes in Salem. This has been sent to the state legislature but is being treated more as a statement of Salem's wish to have statewide legislation.

Two ordinances are proceeding in Salem for bike parking. The first, the municipal green infrastructure ordinance that will require bike parking in new or renovated municipal buildings, has passed. The other is the green infrastructure zoning ordinance, which will require bike parking in all developments. On March 7 there will be a joint public hearing before the City Council and Planning Board. This takes the Planning Board's existing bike parking guidelines and makes them into an ordinance.

Papetti clarifies that the draft ordinance only includes very limited language for bike parking, not the full guidelines. He is concerned that this needs more work but at the same time it must be approved or denied within a short timeline because that is the legal process for a zoning ordinance. He expressed frustration with the City's lack of consultation with Bike Committee.

Ward 6 Councilor Meg Riccardi describes the process and timeline for the zoning ordinance. Papetti and Wathne both consider speaking at the joint public hearing.

Discussion of Remote Versus Hybrid Meetings

The group determines that it wishes to have hybrid in-person/remote meetings beginning May 4.

Meeting Minutes

Williamson motions to approve the 11/3/2021 meeting minutes, Gillis seconds, and all vote in favor.

Adjourn

Caruso motions to adjourn at 8:19 pm, Gillis seconds, and all vote in favor.

Approved by the Bicycling Advisory Committee on June 1, 2022.