

**City of Salem  
Traffic and Parking Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, December 14, 2022**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held remotely on Wednesday, December 14, 2022, at 6:00pm, in accordance with Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, and as amended by Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, and a Special Act extending remote participation meetings until March 31, 2023.

**Present: Traffic and Parking:** Commission Chair Tanya Shallop, Commissioner Jaime Garmendia, Commissioner Jeff Swartz, Director of Traffic and Parking David Kucharsky, and Assistant Director of Traffic and Parking Christina Hodge. **Absent:** Commission Vice Chair Eric Papetti and Commissioner Lt. David Tucker

**CALL OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Chair Shallop. Ms. Shallop explains how members of the public may participate during the remote meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Commission Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Alan Hanscom (no address given) introduces himself and states he is concerned with the playground on the Common. Specifically, Mr. Hanscom states he sees a lot of speeding where Boardman Street connects with Washington Square. Mr. Hanscom explains he is worried about the safety of children and suggests temporary speed bumps could be good for this location.

**NEW/OLD BUSINESS**

**Director's Update**

Mr. Kucharsky explains he has no new updates given the Commission met just two weeks prior, but that he is happy to answer any questions Commissioners may have.

**Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program 2022 Evaluation**

Mr. Kucharsky explains that Jessica Mortell and Leigh Meunier are present from Neighborways to discuss the before and after data collected on the 2022 Neighborhood Traffic Calming locations and discuss the impact of the temporary calming.

Jessica Mortell introduces herself and provides an overview of the Traffic Calming Program, noting the goals are to slow and calm traffic while testing new ideas and collecting data. The idea is the pilot solutions that could become permanent. Ms. Mortell

states the program is about creating safer streets for everyone, and using data, she discusses statistics relating to various speeds and risks of fatality in a collision, as well as effects on visibility. Ms. Mortell discusses the program history from the adoption of the Complete Streets Policy in 2011 to the Traffic Calming Program launch in 2018, with shared streets and temporary calming pilots in 2021. This most recent year saw both temporary pilots and the first permanent calming measures. Ms. Mortell presents a map showing the pilot and permanent installations, which include the North Salem Zone (Buffum, Barr, Barstow, and Dunlap Streets), the South Salem Zone (Cedar, Fairfield, and Gardner Streets), Federal Street (from North Street to Boston Street), Chestnut Street, Mall Street, Union Street, and Columbus Avenue. Ms. Mortell shows the North Salem project limits, gateways, and speed hump locations. She also presents before and after photos showing the North Salem Zone progress from pilot to permanent installation. Ms. Mortell next presents the data for North Salem, which shows that after temporary measures were introduced, speeding decreased by significant amounts on each street. After the calming treatments, the average speeds were 19MPH, representing a 17 percent decrease, and those driving over 40MPH decreased by 81 percent. Average daily traffic also went down very slightly across the zones by about 3 percent.

Next, Ms. Mortell presents a map and photos associated with the South Salem Zone showing the 2020 and 2021 pilots and prior conditions. Ms. Mortell presents similar speed data, showing decreases across all categories and streets. After temporary traffic calming devices were installed, 95 percent of drivers were going under 25MPH. Overall, Ms. Mortell notes that average speeds decreased by 13 percent to 19 MPH, and that the number of drivers going over 40MPH decreased by 85 percent. Average daily traffic for this area reduced 13 percent to 318 vehicles per day.

Ms. Mortell presents a map of Federal Street, noting it is the longest corridor worked on of all the calming projects. She also notes that data was collected at several points along the street. Ms. Mortell presents before and after photos of the pilot, as well as the data collected. Here again, the data show significant decreases in speeding with 95 percent of drivers going under 25MPH after calming measures were introduced. The average speed was also 19MPH after intervention, which represents a 21 percent decrease. The number of drivers going over 40MPH reduced by 93 percent. The average daily traffic here increased by 35 percent, however, Ms. Mortell explains that the before data was collected in June and the after data was collected in October.

Ms. Mortell provides a map, along with before and after photos of Chestnut Street. She indicates the data also shows significant decreases in speeding with 97 percent of drivers going 25MPH or under after the calming measures were introduced. After implementation there were no drivers going above 40MPH, and average daily traffic decreased by 23 percent.

Next Ms. Mortell presents a map showing Mall Street, and notes that data was also collected on Oliver Street to see if traffic shifted over a street as a result of the measures. Along with before and after photos, Ms. Mortell shows the speeding data, demonstrating significant decreases in speeding with 99 percent of drivers going 25MPH or below after the traffic

calming measures were introduced. Average speeds on the street were 17MPH representing a 15 percent decrease. Average daily traffic on Mall Street increased by 68 percent, and on Oliver Street by 37 percent.

Ms. Mortell presents photos, maps, and data for Columbus Avenue next. Ms. Mortell presents data from before calming, after introducing signs only, and after temporary calming measures were introduced. Each intervention resulted in reduced speeding, with those going 25MPH or less going from 59 percent initially to 95 percent. The average speed was 20MPH, which is a decrease of 18 percent, and those driving over 40MPH decreased by 92 percent. Average daily traffic decreased by 33 percent.

Ms. Mortell presents summary data, noting that all areas resulted in reduced speeding.

Mr. Kucharsky presents an overview of the traffic calming program vision, which aims to use temporary pilots, ordinance changes, capital construction projects, and policy changes all to achieve the goal of city-wide traffic calming. Regarding lessons learned, Mr. Kucharsky acknowledges installation and procurement challenges, including reliance on outside contractors. Mr. Kucharsky states the goal is to expand our capacity and using DPS and on-call contractors for support. There will be continued engagement, and Mr. Kucharsky stresses a prioritization on equity. Next steps for this winter include finishing the removal of temporary measures and updating inventory. Mr. Kucharsky states data will be further evaluated to see if any measures should be permanent, and that the feedback survey will be open through February 15, 2023. The 2023 prioritization plan will be presented to the Commission early in the year. For Spring through Fall 2023, the plan is to install temporary pilots as well as permanent interventions on Cedar, Fairfield, and Gardner. More data will be collected and feedback sought. Mr. Kucharsky states that in Winter 2023 temporary interventions will again be removed and inventory updated, along with program data re-evaluation. The program feedback survey can be found at [www.publicinput.com/salemtrafficalming#1](http://www.publicinput.com/salemtrafficalming#1)

Commissioners Garmendia and Swartz thank staff and presenters for the information. Chair Shallop notes it is great to see projects go from pilot to permanent implementation.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Justin Whittier introduces himself as the President of the Federal Street Neighborhood Association and thanks staff and commissioners for the work. Mr. Whittier notes that the speed humps before stop signs are about 40 feet away and that people will slow down for them but then speed up and often run through the stop sign. He suggests they be placed a bit closer. Mr. Whittier also states there has been a desire for additional speed humps, particularly on Lynn Street.

Matt Formica of 13 Moss Street introduces himself and applauds the program and presentation. He states there has been a notable change on his street, and that when the measures were recently removed speeds seemed to go up again. Mr. Formica states they have cushions rather than humps on the street, and his understanding is that it is because

of potential emergency vehicle traffic. Mr. Formica contends that with the speed humps, people try to avoid them by going into the parking lane and that his car was actually hit in such a circumstance.

Melissa Nowak of 19 Columbus Avenue introduces herself and thanks staff and the commission for the speed humps, noting she witnessed a big difference. Ms. Nowak states she was dismayed to see as soon as the measures were removed the speeding immediately increased again. Ms. Nowak states that even with the large speed humps sometimes people try to weave around to evade them, but that it has certainly made a difference. Ms. Nowak indicates she has heard that many people are avoiding Columbus Avenue and are now on Fort Avenue and speeding there instead.

Ken Loof of 33 Buffum Street introduces himself and echoes prior comments. He states he has noted a decrease in speeds and has been pleased. Mr. Loof asks about the left turn at the end of Mason onto North Street, noting it has been no left turn and that there were discussions of left turns being permitted during certain times of day. Mr. Kucharsky explains that they advised the ordinance to permit left turns outside of peak hours, and that now the signal needs to be upgraded along with some other upgrades to allow it and signage will be installed.

Andy Lipman of 28 Chestnut Street introduces himself as the president of Chestnut Street Associates, and states he has been involved in the program since the start. Mr. Lipman echoes other commenters and speaks in favor of the interventions. He also notes an immediate increase in speed once the measures are removed. Mr. Lipman urges the Commission to think more broadly than just speed, noting that most of the streets were substantially residential that have now become cut-throughs. The selected streets were once quiet and are now thoroughfares, and so now it may be helpful to consider that this is an endemic problem in the City. People are not just going fast, but the traffic has also increased to a point where at times it is hard to share the streets as much as we would like to, according to Mr. Lipman.

Georgia Herendeski 119 North Street introduces herself and asks why some houses can park and others cannot. Chair Shallop notes we are discussing the traffic calming program and asks if her question is related to that. Chair Shallop encourages her to speak with Mr. Kucharski separately to discuss her issue.

Chair Shallop thanks the commenters, as well as staff, and Commissioner Swartz echoes her sentiments. Mr. Kucharsky encourages the public to take the public survey to provide program feedback, noting again that it is open until February 15, 2023. He adds that additional streets will be discussed at next meeting, along with a prioritization plan.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY LEGALLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION**

None.

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS SCHEDULE**

The next meeting is scheduled for January 18, 2022, at 6:00PM.

### **MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

**November 30, 2022**

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Swartz motions to approve the minutes from the November 30, 2022, meeting as drafted. Commissioner Garmendia seconds the motion. **The vote is all in favor, the motion passes.**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

*On a motion duly made by Commissioner Garmendia and seconded by Commissioner Swartz, the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 6:47 PM.*