

Meeting Minutes

Salem Bicycling & Shared Path Advisory Committee

Wednesday, March 1, 2023 | 6:30 p.m.

98 Washington Street, First Floor Medium Conference Room
and via remote participation

Members Present: John Wathne (Chair), Matt Caruso, Connor Ryan, Colleen Downie, Michael Jaros, Alex Maranto, Walter Morrell

Members Absent: Annie Wolf, Josh Gillis, Cat Seiferth

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 reports on the following items:

- The Open Meeting Law pandemic relief for public meetings, allowing remote participation, is set to expire in April. Devine will update the Committee if this is extended or it isn't and the Committee reverts to in-person meetings.
- Devine reminds the Committee that members are free to engage in political activities as private citizens throughout the mayoral campaign, but not as members of this Committee.
- The Committee's requested changes have been made to the interactive map showing the status of the 2018 Bike Master Plan recommendations. Jaros notes that Bluebikes stations include some ridership data and Devine will confirm what it is. Wathne states that the map underscores the need to restore the Ocean Ave. Bridge connection over the rail line. The group discusses the status of Bike Plan recommendations for Highland Ave.
- Design of upgrades to the trail along the Lead Mills at the Salem-Marblehead line is underway. The project is intended to improve the path and bridges and protect the utilities under the path. The Committee wishes to see the bollards at the Forest River bridge removed.

Bluebikes Bikeshare Program Data, Promotion, and Expansion

Document shared: Salem Bluebikes Data, Through 2/26/2023 (Slide deck)

Devine shares data from February. Ridership is down as expected for the winter and in line with some of the peer communities, but behind systemwide ridership. Devine presents a comparison of Salem's season fluctuations versus the same systemwide. Salem's ridership dropped 92% from its last peak to low point, while systemwide was a 76% drop. And Devine found a source of data that could be visualized to show the popular (or less popular) routes between various stations and will see if the Planning Department's intern could take it on.

Devine reports that the three additional stations for Derby Street, Bridge Street Neck, and Vinnin Square are coming. Devine discussed internally the Committee's suggestion for signage directing people to the Vinnin Square station, but the City will monitor ridership first before doing that. Devine also notes that Bluebikes stations have appeared on Google Maps, but it seems that this may be a beta feature that isn't always activated.

Devine states that Boston is planning to add electric bikes to the system this spring. They are looking at making 18% of the fleet electric. Some other markets are shifting to e-bike only, with no pedal bikes. The financial model changes with e-bikes, with some better potential to be closer to self-sufficient with less public subsidy. Devine adds that recent state legislation appropriated funds for rebates for e-bike purchases, but a program needs to be set up to implement this.

North Street: Finalization of Committee's comments on feasibility memorandum to move bike lanes off street between Foster and Osborne Streets

Document share: North Street Protected Bike Lane Feasibility Between Foster Street and Osbourne [sic] Street, Toole Design, 12/6/2022.

Devine drafted a letter summarizing the committee's comments on the feasibility memo. The committee has no further comments. Wathne will review and sign the letter.

Devine also invites the group to conduct counts of bike ridership on North Street.

The group discusses a spring group ride on North Street. Devine will discuss with partners at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and Salem State University. Wathne will contact B&N Fitness as a potential partner. The group decides to tentatively schedule additional remote meetings to plan for an event. The meeting dates are March 15 and April 12. Devine will send an email about this to the committee, including those not in attendance tonight.

Discussion of Bike Parking

Devine says he is working with Traffic & Parking staff to identify locations for more bike parking on North Street and in other locations.

Committee Vacancy

Devine reports that Eric Papetti has resigned from the committee. He received a promotion at the Federal Transportation Administration that involves him in some Salem grant projects that he sees as a conflict with his work on this committee. He still intends to be active as a private citizen. The group expresses gratitude for his years of service to the city. The Acting Mayor and his staff are aware of the vacancy and the applicants to join the board.

Conflict of Interest Training

Devine states that every city employee and board member is required to complete the training. The training has been upgraded and Devine finds it a big improvement over the past training. You have to use your City of Salem credentials to log in to it.

Meeting Minutes

Jaros motions and Ryan seconds to approve the 11/2/2022 and 12/7/2022 meeting minutes and all vote in favor.

Adjournment

Ryan motions and Jaros seconds to adjourn at 7:05pm and all vote in favor.

Approved by the Bicycling & Shared Path Advisory Committee on 6/7/2023.