

**City of Salem
Traffic and Parking Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 10, 2024**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held remotely on Wednesday, April 10, 2024, at 6:00pm, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

Present: Chair Jaime Garmendia, Commissioner Jeff Swartz, Commissioner Brendan Casey, Commissioner Lt. David Tucker, and Commissioner Erin Turowski. Also present were Assistant Transportation Director Christina Hodge and Transportation Data Analyst Russell Findley. **Absent:** None

CALL OF MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm by Chair Garmendia. Mr. Garmendia explains how members of the public may participate during the remote meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Garmendia opens the floor to public comment.

Dr. Jane Curtis Arlander, of 93 Federal Street, introduces herself and notes that a “No U-Turn” sign has disappeared from the island on North Street at the Federal/North Street intersection. She indicates it has been gone for several years, and that it creates a dangerous situation for pedestrians in the crosswalk when cars take a U-turn. Ms. Arlander contends she has had many near misses. Chair Garmendia thanks Ms. Arlander for the reminder about the sign, and notes he recently witnessed someone taking an illegal U-turn there. There is a brief discussion about how there is currently a “no left turn sign,” but not a “no U-turn” sign.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Director’s Update

Assistant Transportation Director Christina Hodge states that the work at the Jefferson Avenue/Willson Street intersection has begun this week, starting with some sidewalk work. Ms. Hodge states staff are working with Councillor Morsillo to narrow down a date and time to have an open public meeting to go over the plan and schedule items at the High School. Ms. Hodge explains that May 1, 2024, is the target date for the Salem Skipper expansion with Beverly and Danvers, noting that pursuant to Federal funding, the Skipper service will travel to certain zones within the two neighboring communities. Ms. Hodge also notes that the permanent speed humps installed on Columbus Avenue and Chestnut Street are coming soon and that abutters will be notified. She discusses the Safe Streets For All Action Plan as well and recent meetings with the consultants and next steps.

Right Turn on Red Recommendations

Chair Garmendia reminds the public that Commission and Councillors have been discussing the issue of no right turn on red in Salem and reviewing various intersections in the City to develop recommendations regarding signage and ordinance changes. The remaining section to discuss is the Route 114 corridor, along with a few intersections that warranted further consideration.

Ms. Hodge presents a map of the remaining intersections, and Traffic and Parking staff member Russell Findley presents recommendations. Mr. Findley explains that for the intersection at Federal Street and North Street, the recommendation is for an ordinance change and “no right turn on red” signage on Bridge Street, as well as coming from Federal Street. For the intersection of Essex Street and Summer Street, the recommendation is ordinance changes and signage to make no right on red from all approaches.

Chair Garmendia opens the floor to public comment on the intersections discussed.

Danielle Hammerhan of 28 Beckford Street introduces herself and asks for clarification as she was not present at prior meetings to discuss the right turn on red recommendations. Chair Garmendia explains the difference between intersections that are signed but not in the ordinance and ones that need both signage and ordinance changes.

Mr. Findley next discusses the intersection of Gedney Street and Broad Street, where the recommendation is to keep conditions as is from both all approaches (no signage or ordinance preventing right on red from Summer Street or Gedney Street). The next intersection discussed is at Washington, Margin, and Mill Streets. The recommendation is for ordinance changes and added signage for the southbound approach from Washington Street onto Mill Street, a “right turn on red after stop” sign for the approach from Mill Street to Canal Street, and ordinance changes and signage for both the Washington Street to Washington Street approach, and the Canal Street to Washington Street approach. Lt. Tucker discusses recent accidents at this intersection and some background regarding the recommendations. Commissioner Turowski comments that the “right turn on red after stop” sign is important for cyclist safety in the area because of the nearby bike and multi-use path connections.

Chair Garmendia opens the floor to public comment on the intersections discussed, but there is none.

Mr. Findley next discusses the intersection at Lafayette Street and Washington Street, where the recommendation is to keep conditions as is (not signed or restricted coming northbound, and a “right turn on red after stop” sign heading south. For the intersection at Harbor Street and Lafayette Street, the recommendations are to add signage and ordinance changes for the east, west, and southbound approaches. The commissioners and staff discuss these intersections briefly.

Chair Garmendia opens the floor to public comment on the intersections discussed but there is none.

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Swartz motions to accept the recommendations pertaining to ordinance and signage changes related to right turn on red to City Council. Commissioner Casey seconds the motion. **The vote is five (5) in favor and none (0) opposed, the motion passes.**

The Commissioners discuss the three remaining intersections from prior meetings. For the intersection at Congress Street, Derby Street, and Hawthorne, the Commissioners discuss the recommendation of adding a no turn on red from Congress Street. Commissioner Swartz speaks against the recommendation. Lt. Tucker suggests revisiting it after the lane and striping reconfiguration. Commissioner Turowski states she would be in favor of a no right turn on red turn from Congress to Derby. Mr. Findley clarifies that staff recommendation is to keep as is, which is not signed and not in the ordinance. Chair Garmendia states the Commission at the last meeting recommended the ordinance change and signage. Commissioner Casey agrees with Commissioner Turowski.

Ward 1 City Councillor Jerzylo introduces herself and speaks against a knee-jerk reaction to this intersection and suggests conducting a traffic study and looking into other safety solutions here. Councillor Jerzylo maintains that restricting right turn on red will result in backed up traffic on Congress Street. Chair Garmendia disagrees with Councillor Jerzylo, and states he is open to revisiting in the future but feels strongly about keeping the Commission recommendation from last time.

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Lt. Tucker motions to recommend further study of the Congress Street and Derby Street intersection. Commissioner Swartz seconds the motion. **The vote is five (2) in favor and none (3) opposed, the motion does not pass.**

The Commissioners next discuss the intersection at the exit of the commuter rail station on Bridge Street. The Commission voted at the last meeting to not adopt the staff recommendation of signage and ordinance changes to restrict right on red. There is no change to this recommendation.

The last intersection discussed is at Webb Street, Essex Street, and Szetela Lane. Staff recommended ordinance changes and signage at the last meeting from both Szetela Lane onto Webb Street, and from Webb Street onto Szetela Lane. Councillor Jerzylo had commented that the right turn is necessary for both approaches, and that funding for reconstruction of the intersection is coming in 2026. The Commission recommended further investigation. Commissioner Casey agrees with Councillor Jerzylo regarding the turn from Szetela Lane onto Webb Street.

Councillor Jerzylo suggests the intersection needs better crosswalks and that other options would be better than restricting right turns on red.

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Casey motions to recommend keeping the ability to turn right on red from Szetela Lane onto Webb Street, and from Webb Street onto Szetela Lane. Commissioner Swartz seconds the motion. **The vote is five (5) in favor and none (0) opposed, the motion passes.**

The Commissioners next discuss the intersection of Orne Street and North Street, where ordinance changes and signage were recommended from staff, but the Commission declined, seeking further investigation after comments. There is no change. The last intersection discussed is southbound from Flint Street to Essex Street, where staff recommended ordinance changes and signage, but the commissioners questioned the necessity and declined the recommendation. There is no further change.

Neighborhood Traffic Calming

Ms. Hodge explains that every year there is a recap, followed but a kickoff for the following Neighborhood Traffic Calming program. She states that Jessica Mortell from Neighborways is present. Ms. Hodge reminds everyone of the program's background and goals, which are to improve safety on local neighborhood streets by slowing speeds and reducing conflicts. She discusses the project selection and priority tool, as well as the pilot-to-permanent process and public engagement efforts. During the public input feedback period at the beginning of the year, the Department received 18 comments, 8 of which were about Proctor Street, two were about Federal Street, and some were about making projects permanent, while others were requests to remove speed humps and have more police enforcement. Ms. Hodge next discusses the 2024 calming workplan, identifying pilot installations on Raymond Road, Proctor Street, Mall Street, Federal Street, and the potential need for evaluation on Arthur Street/Champlain Road/Horton Street area surrounding the Jefferson Avenue/Willson Street intersection. Permanent installations are planned for Gardner Street, Chestnut Street, and Columbus Avenue. Ms. Hodge presents maps and images of the streets with permanent installations and discusses them in more detail.

Jessica Mortell introduces herself and discusses the pilot installations, beginning with Raymond Road. The proposal is to move forward with six temporary speed humps, as was done last year.

Chair Garmendia asks for comments, but there are none.

Ms. Mortell next discusses Proctor Street, and states this will be the second year of the pilot. She summarizes comments received and describes results from an evaluation study of the area. From 2022 to 2023, traffic on Proctor Street decreased by 17 percent, while traffic increased by 27 percent on Witch Hill Road. The recommendation is to reinstall the pilot on Proctor Street, but to also add a double yellow centerline to Witch Hill Road, make the stop signs more visible at Hillside and Witch Hill Road, and to continue to monitor and collect data.

Chair Garmendia asks for comments, but there are none.

Ms. Mortell discusses Mall Street next, which will be in its third pilot year. The recommendation is to reinstall the three speed humps similar to last year. She also discusses Federal Street from North Street to Boston Street, which has been an interactive process with adjustments to speed hump locations in 2023 to be closer to stop lines per neighborhood requests. Staff are coordinating with longer-term projects at Beckford Street and Boston Street as well. Ms. Mortell also discusses the Federal Street comments, which suggested removing the parking stops and creating a walkway in the Beckford Street intersection, as well as removing the no parking space. There was also a request to provide a left and right turn lane on Federal Street approaching Boston Street. Additional public comments are discussed, and Ms. Mortell makes note of additional speed hump requests and requests for adjustments on Federal, Monroe, and Lynn Street. Ms. Mortell presents speed data from Federal Street, showing changes resulting from modifications in year two. She next discusses City of Salem speed hump guidelines based on best practices and lessons learned. Target locations should be mid-block on residential streets and are not appropriate at intersections. They are also not appropriate on short dead-end streets, streets with hospitals, emergency response routes, evacuation routes, and major bus routes. The maximum roadway grade should be 8 percent, and the minimum horizontal curve radii should be 300 feet. Ms. Mortell indicates the target speed is 20 to 25MPH, and the target spacing is 280 feet, with range of 200 to 400 feet based on site constraints and engineering judgment. She also discusses offsets, as well as signs and markings, and additional placement considerations such as fixed vertical objects, property lines and light poles to reduce swerving.

Chair Garmendia asks about other cities and town traffic calming measures. Ms. Mortell discusses Somerville and Boston, which are introducing more speed humps and redesigning intersections. Malden and Melrose are just starting traffic calming programs and are looking at beginning pilots.

Chair Garmendia opens the floor to public comment.

Dr. Jane Curtis Arlander introduces herself again and thanks staff and commissioners for working with her neighborhood. Dr. Arlander states that drivers have been flying through stop signs and asks for humps closer to intersections for that reason. She also asks when the speed humps will be installed, claiming last year that they were installed late in the season. Ms. Hodge explains that constraints include DPS and staff availability, and that an exact date has not yet been determined.

Constance Arlander, of 91 Federal Street, introduces herself, and states she has concerns about cars coming down Monroe Street not stopping or slowing down, and taking a left without looking right. Ms. Arlander also discusses drivers trying to avoid the bumps and asks for ways to prevent that behavior.

Justin Whittier, of 10 River Street, introduces himself and states he is the president of the Federal Street Neighborhood Association. Mr. Whittier indicates the association submitted a letter with concerns about the traffic calming process. He notes that an initial concern of his neighborhood was cars speeding through stop signs, and that they requested raised

crosswalks. He acknowledges that raised crosswalks are not normally tools for traffic calming, and that the association requested that the speed humps be as close to the intersections as possible. He also acknowledges that speed humps are not meant to be placed on crosswalks but asks that they be placed as close as possible. Mr. Whittier states it is unclear why they cannot be installed closer. Mr. Whittier also discusses the intersection at Beckford Street, where he suggests a ten-foot offset from the driveway. He states the previous hump location has not been effective. For the Boston Street intersection, he reiterates the request for a trial of two lanes, suggesting that bump outs actually create a more hazardous situation.

The commissioners and staff discuss the matter of speed hump spacing and changes in speed data from year to year. Ms. Mortell also notes that as a pedestrian she witnesses people not stopping at stop signs even when she is at a crosswalk. She suggests this is a cultural issue and that she is open to ideas that will help stopping at stop signs. Commissioner Casey acknowledges the request from Mr. Whittier for raised crosswalks, but notes that they might not be feasible for the intersection based on engineering, drainage, and geometry, aside from budget restraints. Ms. Hodge confirms.

Danielle Hammerhan introduces herself again and expresses concerns about installations with bolts sticking out. She suggests more oversight of contractors during installation. Ms. Hammerhan reiterates Ms. Arlander's concerns about Monroe Street, and also provides suggestions for speed hump spacing/placement. She also questions when a permanent installation will occur for Federal Street. Ms. Hodge notes that permanent installation will depend on finalizing and agreeing on effective speed hump locations.

Regarding next steps, Ms. Hodge states that staff will review additional input from the Commission and will look to move forward with the pilot again. She states they will also take into consideration public comments. Ms. Mortell indicates the pilot and permanent installations will occur in spring and summer, with data collection and evaluation to follow. All pilots will be removed before snowfall in early winter.

Ms. Hodge notes that the public can find more info about traffic calming and see the crash dashboard and speed and volume data at the City Traffic and Parking Website, or at <https://traffic-calming-1-salem.hub.arcgis.com/>. She also notes the public input webpage, which is www.publicinput.com/salemtrafficalming

OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY LEGALLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

None.

UPCOMING MEETINGS SCHEDULE

The next meeting is scheduled for April 24, 2024, at 6:00PM.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

March 13, 2024

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Swartz motions to approve the minutes for the March 13, 2024, meeting of the Traffic and Parking Commission as drafted. Commissioner Turowski seconds the motion. **The vote is five (5) in favor and none (0) opposed, the motion passes.**

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Swartz and seconded by Commissioner Casey the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:18 PM.