

Meeting Minutes

Salem Bicycling & Shared Path Advisory Committee

Wednesday, October 4, 2023 | 6:30 p.m.

City Hall Annex 1st Floor Meeting Room & Via Remote Participation

Members Present: John Wathne (Chair), Walter Morrell, Cat Seiferth, Annie Wolf, Josh Nagle, Charlie Heaps, Connor Ryan, Josh Gillis, Matt Caruso

Members Absent: Colleen Downie, Alex Maranto

Also Present: Tom Devine, Senior Planner

Call Meeting to Order

Wathne calls the meeting to order.

Public Comment

Wathne opens public comment and there are none.

Events

Wolf went on a group ride with advocates from other communities through Marblehead, Salem, Beverly, and Manchester-by-the-Sea. The group is sharing information and intends to learn from each other. She will pass on the group's emails to Devine.

Heaps attended one of the bike buses that was discussed at the previous meeting.

Bike Parking Ordinance

Devine and Wolf discussed approaches to drafting a Bike Committee ordinance prior to the meeting. The group discusses the purpose of the undertaking. Wathne suggests taking a few minutes at every meeting to look together at text. Devine suggests breaking the work into steps to review existing bike parking conditions, identify the problem, confirm whether an ordinance is the solution, determine outreach plan and who outside the group is to be consulted, find example ordinance, draft an outline, seek input from City departments, draft the ordinance, obtain legal review, and submit to City Council.

The group discusses what an ordinance could look like: Will it apply to both new and existing buildings? Will the City subsidize private bike parking? Wolf suggests the group start by reviewing the guidelines first and then move on to next steps. Nagle says that he heard from his neighbors that there are not enough secure places to park a bike near their destinations. He is also hearing lately about bike thefts.

Bluebikes Bikeshare Program Data, Promotion, and Expansion

Steve Kapantais of 23 Wisteria Street states that Salem's bike share doesn't serve people with disabilities and does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. He asks that the Committee report to the Mayor that accessible and adaptive bikes should be added. Caruso asks if Kapantais knows of an example of a bike share with adaptive bikes and Kapantais says he will share with Devine. The group acknowledges the importance of the matter and asks Devine to follow up with the City Solicitor and Bluebikes.

Documents reviewed: Salem Bluebikes Data through 9/30/2023 (slide deck); Lyft 2023 Micromobility Report, Boston Snapshot

Devine presents ridership data for September. This September did not surpass September 2022, which was during the Orange Line shutdown when a free month of Bluebikes membership was available to everyone. The group discusses the seasonal changes in ridership by station.

Devine also presents Lyft's demographics data for the Bluebikes system from its 2023 Micromobility Report.

Devine reports that the City is seeking grant funding to replenish lost bikes and support operations costs. The City is offering a free 1-month pass to residents and workers in Salem for October. The Congress and Peabody Street station across from Shetland Park will be moved across the street into a former bus stop across the street temporarily during intersection improvements.

Bike Parking at Food Stores

Devine is reaching out to the Chamber of Commerce to discuss outreach to stores before issuing a letter. Caruso reminds the group that they hope to see bike parking at all stores, not just food stores. Seiferth highlights the challenges for local stores and suggests the City do all it can to make this simple, clear, and easy for them.

Maintenance, repainting, and upgrades of existing bike lanes

Heaps had asked for information regarding maintenance, repainting, and upgrades for existing painted bike lanes, and Devine presents information. Flexposts at the Willson St. bike lanes and other locations throughout the city are removed for the winter, except on North Street where they stay year round. There are two on-call contractors for restriping, but they have a lot of competing commitments that make scheduling their work in Salem a challenge. Lafayette Street's bike lanes (West Ave. to Marblehead) are planned to be upgraded. Downtown lanes are beginning to fade and will eventually need a refresh. Parts of the lanes on Congress St. have been repainted, but more in the corridor is needed too.

Staff Update

Devine provides the following updates:

- There is no North Street data packages available yet. The Traffic & Parking staff wish to have more than a year of operations before presenting the data. But in the meantime there is usage data for the North Street Bluebikes station.

Heaps asks for recommended sources for publically available data for road safety, pedestrian fatalities, and motorist fatalities. Devine will look into it an get back to the Committee.

FY24 Community Preservation Plan – Request for Comment/Input

Devine states that the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) asks annually for comments on its Community Preservation Plan that is updated yearly and used to guide their distribution of grant funds. The Committee was successful in past years in convincing the CPC to include bike facilities and infrastructure in its grant application review criteria. And last year it asked the CPC to encourage applicants to coordinate early with engineering and planning staff to make sure multimodal transportation infrastructure is incorporated into projects as appropriate.

Meeting Minutes

Caruso motions, Heaps seconds, and all vote in favor to approve the 7/19/2023 meeting minutes.

Adjourn

Gillis motions, Morrell seconds, and all vote in favor to adjourn 8:00 p.m.

Approved by the Bicycling & Shared Path Advisory Committee on 1/3/2024.