

**City of Salem  
Traffic and Parking Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, May 25, 2022**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held remotely on Wednesday, May 25, 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.

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

**CALL OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm 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.

Paul Viccica of 35 Broad Street introduces himself and his wife, Helen Sides, explaining that he is on the Zoning Board of Appeals, and she is on the Planning Board. Mr. Viccica indicates there is a speeding problem on Broad Street, and that recently trucks - which are not allowed on Broad Street - have been traveling down at high speeds as well to avoid construction elsewhere in the City. Mr. Viccica maintains Broad Street is one of the widest and straightest roads in Salem, and therefore it is dangerous as cars pick up speed going from one end to the other. Mr. Viccica explains that there have been several accidents due to the speeding, including a recent accident involving a speeding car hitting parked cars. Mr. Viccica requests that the traffic light at Dalton and Broad be made operational again, stating when he first moved here the light was always red or cycling in both directions but is now a blinking green light. Mr. Viccica also suggests a three-way stop at Pickering and Broad, as now there is only a single stop sign coming out of Pickering. Mr. Viccica next suggests having a single yellow line in the street rather than a double yellow line, as it is a residential street and he contends that double yellow lines encourage speeding. Mr. Viccica contends these recommendations are low cost and could be implemented quickly to help what is currently a dangerous condition on Broad Street.

**NEW/OLD BUSINESS**

**Director's Update**

Mr. Kucharsky explains the community car share program launched today, and that there was a small event with the Mayor, some local elected officials, and staff, to promote this

service. The company, Getaround, provides peer-to-peer vehicle rentals generally, but in this instance, according to Mr. Kucharsky, the City of Salem has procured nine vehicles that will be placed throughout the City (Pequot Highlands, Blaney St Wharf, Museum Place Garage, Crescent Lot, and a location on Salem State campus). The goal is to provide an affordable means for residents to use cars when needed rather than owning a vehicle, with pricing around \$10-\$12 per hour. Mr. Kucharsky indicates the vehicles are hybrid.

Mr. Kucharsky also explains he has been working with the City Solicitor, Building Commissioner, and Police Departments on an overlay district to address the ongoing use of private lots to charge for parking during the month of October. The hope is this will bring some control over the process, which will soon go before City Council. A joint hearing with the Planning Board will occur to discuss permits, fees, and signage. Mr. Kucharsky explains that applicants within this designated district (B5 district, expanded out by a quarter of a mile) that wish to use their private parking lot to charge for parking outside of their other uses, would seek a permit from the City.

Mr. Kucharsky provides updates on the ongoing Museum Place Garage work, noting additional funds have been requested pursuant to the discovery of additional deterioration and issues. Mr. Kucharsky also notes the BlueBike program is being expanded, with additional locations being scoped out for later in June and July.

## **Broad Street**

Mr. Kucharsky explains there have been many complaints about speeding and other safety issues regarding Broad Street, and that consultant Tom Loughlin from GM2 is present to review the existing condition evaluation of Broad Street from Flint Street to Winthrop Street. Mr. Kucharsky indicates the street is wide, sees a large volume of cars daily, and that speeding has been an issue for a while. Mr. Kucharsky states staff are interested in quick, short-term solutions as well as long-term fixes for the area, and that there will be a public input site to allow for public comment and feedback.

Mr. Loughlin introduces himself and discusses the existing conditions study for the Broad Street corridor. Mr. Loughlin identifies the study limits as the stretch from Dalton Parkway to Winthrop Street and presents a map of the area. Data collected and reviewed include travel speeds, crash data, volume data, and resident comments/complaints submitted to the City. Mr. Loughlin explains that while the statutory speed limit is 25MPH, the average speed is above 28MPH, with approximately 75 percent of drivers going over the speed limit, and maximum speeds of almost 50MPH. Crash data show a total of four accidents at the intersection of Broad and Dalton Parkway from 2015 to 2019, and three accidents at the Winthrop Street and Pickering intersections during the same time span. None of the accidents were between a vehicle and pedestrian or cyclist according to Mr. Loughlin, although he states that residents have expressed there have been many near misses. Broad Street sees volumes in excess of 4,000 vehicles per day, mostly passenger cars.

Regarding the intersection at Broad Street and Dalton Parkway, Mr. Loughlin explains it is a signalized intersection flashing red and green, with an expansive pavement area that

results in lengthy crosswalks and cars bypassing one another when cars are turning. Mr. Loughlin indicates pedestrian signals are outdated, and that there are limited signs and faded pavement markings, with no accommodations for bicyclists throughout the corridor. Mr. Loughlin states the crosswalks are not only very long but are also non-compliant for a variety of reasons, with missing curb ramps as well. There are missing, worn, and inconsistent pavement markings, and the signal system is outdated. Mr. Loughlin indicates the width of the road and wide pavement areas likely contribute to the speeding and allow drivers to maintain their speed while by-passing turning vehicles, noting the lane width is 15-16 feet, compared to 12-foot lanes on I-95, and paved road width is 45 to 50 feet wide. Mr. Loughlin recommends the flashing red and green signal be changed to a flashing red and yellow light as a short-term measure. Mr. Loughlin identifies other issues such as parking areas that are too close to the intersection, which reduces visibility, and the fact that there are no accommodations for cyclists.

Mr. Loughlin summarizes the existing conditions and presents an overhead view of the street. He notes the area is listed in the Salem Bicycle Master Plan as Location 62, which is recommended to have parking-protected bike lanes for formalized crossings at each intersection. Along the corridor, Mr. Loughlin notes there are additional pedestrian and ADA issues such as missing curb ramps at cross streets, non-compliant crosswalks with limited sight distance, inconsistent walking surfaces, and sidewalks that would benefit from improvement.

Mr. Loughlin next discusses the intersection at Broad, Pickering, and Winthrop Streets, noting there are similar pedestrian and ADA issues, and that geometry improvements are warranted. He notes issues regarding cut-through traffic between Winthrop and Pickering Street as well, and indicates the City is coordinating with the developer of 5 Broad Street to improve the geometry at Winthrop Street. Various visibility issues for pedestrians and drivers are noted relating to cars parking near crosswalks and intersections. Mr. Loughlin indicates there is a missing stop sign at the end of Pickering as well.

Chair Shallop asks what the next steps would be, and Mr. Kucharsky indicates the plan would be to take feedback and public comment, to then develop plans going forward. Mr. Kucharsky explains that the project website for public comment can be found at <https://publicinput.com/broadstreetcorridorproject>, with comment period open through June 30, 2022.

Commissioner Garmendia notes he used to be a resident on Phelps Street off of Broad, and that he used to commute to the train station by bike or on foot most days. Commissioner Garmendia agrees with the earlier comments provided by Mr. Viccica, and states he was recently almost T-boned by someone coming from Pickering Street trying to get onto Winthrop Street. Mr. Garmendia states the corridor is in pretty bad shape for pedestrians, noting uneven brick sidewalks and ADA non-compliance issues. He agrees that the Dalton Parkway intersection needs a modern signal. Commissioner Garmendia applauds the master plan recommendation of protected bike lanes, noting that while he prefers concrete-protected bike lanes, parking-protected bike lanes are a good first step. He

suggests considering the full width of the right of way and utilizing the space well as very little of it needs to be devoted to traffic.

Vice Chair Papetti concurs with Commissioner Garmendia's comments and suggests being systematic and intentional about what the goals are for each of this, as well as all other projects, perhaps setting measurable goals and standards for certain things like crosswalk lengths. He also supports getting as much feedback from neighbors as possible.

Chair Shallop agrees with the comments provided and asks if pedestrian or cyclist counts were conducted in addition to traffic counts. She states she is in favor of reducing the width of the vehicular travel lanes as well as the addition of protected bike lanes. Chair Shallop also favors all of the short-term fixes such as replacing missing signs and adjusting stop lines where necessary.

Commission Lt. Tucker states there are several issues including speeding, use of the area as a cut-through to connect north and south Salem, and poor road conditions. He notes one possible solution discussed is reversing the flow of Flint Street and letting traffic come up from Essex to the intersection using a light to meter the traffic. Additional solutions include lessening the width of the road and making the corridor more ADA compliant.

Commissioner Garmendia asks about the parking restrictions, and Mr. Kucharsky indicates it is open free parking. Mr. Garmendia also suggests looking into the parking situation and whether it makes sense to make it resident permit parking for part of the year or meter some of it, noting that few of the homes have driveways.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Luigi Lake of Broad Street introduces himself and states he lives next to Phelps Street. Mr. Lake suggests that Broad Street is a perfect place to set an example for modern urban planning in the City. Mr. Lake states he is against the idea of reversing the flow of traffic on Flint Street and suggests that many of the streets around Broad have received calming measures but this has not. He explains there are many families with children on the street that walk to the middle school, but that speeding makes it unsafe. He agrees that the road should be narrowed with protected bike lanes, noting he has biked less because of how dangerous the street feels. Mr. Lake adds that the right turn from Broad Street to Flint Street is particularly dangerous because it is a blind spot where cars cannot see pedestrians. He asserts that traffic congestion and issues are a result of poor planning and design, not density, and that he is happy to see Broad Street getting looked at finally.

Isa Lechko of 21 1/2 Broad Street introduces herself and agrees that Broad Street is dangerous to cross, particularly at Pickering and Broad. Ms. Lechko states she has thought about moving because of the unsafe conditions, noting her car was hit twice while parked in the first few years of living here. Because many residents do not have driveways on Broad Street, they rely on on-street parking, and she states that it is unsafe for parked cars as well as pedestrians and cyclists. She urges staff to collect more data during warmer months, noting the street draws a lot of motorcycles during warmer weather. Ms. Lechko

asks that noise pollution be considered in the discussions, noting the street is very loud for a residential street due to all the speeding. Ms. Lechko also speaks against reversing the traffic on Flint Street, stressing that Broad Street does not need any more traffic. She states it has been frustrating to see Chestnut Street receive calming measures when Broad Street sees more traffic.

Mr. Kucharsky reminds the public of the comment period open through June 30, 2022, indicating that plans and designs will be developed following a review of feedback.

### **Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendations: North Street**

Mr. Kucharsky explains that this item has come before the Commission before, and that staff is seeking a recommendation on proposed amendments to the City's Traffic Ordinance as it pertains to the North Street Safety Enhancement Project. There will be protected bike lanes and improvements to bus stops as part of the project, and Mr. Kucharsky indicates part of the process has involved rescinding old ordinances and introducing new ones. Mr. Kucharsky presents revised design plans that resulted from the feedback of the joint meeting of the Traffic and Parking Commission and Bike Committee. He identifies the ordinances that need to be rescinded, those that need to be replaced, and the new ones that need to be added to accommodate the designs and changes to parking, including changes to accessible spaces and changes to bus stops, as well as the addition of protected bike lanes. Mr. Kucharsky discusses the changes to service zones and signage and identifies the various zones of parking on the map. He also notes the change in the hours allowable for turning left onto North Street from Mason, with prohibitions between 6AM and 9AM and 3PM and 7PM.

Vice Chair Papetti asks a clarifying question regarding the restricted left-hand turn and whether the signal will be reprogrammed to allow it during certain times, and Mr. Kucharsky states that is correct.

Commissioner Garmendia asks about traffic volumes and speeds on the corridor. Mr. Kucharsky notes upwards of 7,000 vehicles per day, and notes the data is posted on the Traffic and Parking webpage. He notes speeding has been an issue in the corridor as well and notes the public input site is available with comments.

Mr. Kucharsky next presents the proposed updated ordinance language that would be submitted to City Council pursuant to recommendation by the Commission.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment but there is none.

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Papetti motions to recommend the proposed ordinance language as drafted to City Council. Commissioner Garmendia seconds the motion. The vote is four (4) in favor and none (0) opposed. **The motion passes.**

### **Maintenance of City Sidewalks**

Chair Shallop explains the Commission will review and discuss a draft ordinance introduced by Councilor Hapworth relative to the maintenance of City sidewalks.

Councilor Hapworth introduces himself and states that this is a work in progress, and that he would not ask his peers to vote on something that the Disability Commission is not comfortable with. He explains he brought this issue forward because sidewalks are an issue that many residents care about. There are many unofficial policies, but none of it is written into the ordinances, and therefore Councilor Hapworth thought prioritizing maintenance and repair would be important, with certain standards established. The proposed ordinance language is presented. Councilor Hapworth notes there will be a joint meeting on June 22, 2022, between the Disability Commission and Government Services, and that the topic will be discussed further. He asks the Commission for any feedback or questions.

Chair Shallop states she is interested in the maintenance and accessibility of sidewalks, but discusses she has concerns regarding equity issues, noting it seems to prioritize keeping bricks in more affluent areas. She also notes that the City has not been great about making sure sidewalks are accessible, and it would be unfortunate to make any situations where accessibility continues to be an issue.

Vice Chair Papetti agrees that throughout City we could benefit from more aesthetic options than concrete but states the priority should be creating accessible sidewalks. Vice Chair Papetti states the city does not even have a five-year plan for reconstructing sidewalks that has been fully developed and vetted. Mr. Papetti suggests making it part of the ADA transition plan for the public rights of way.

Commissioner Garmendia agrees with Mr. Papetti regarding materials, and states that you want materials to be consistent. Mr. Garmendia states the inconsistency creates an impediment to accessibility and suggests one bad patch can render a whole block or corridor inaccessible.

Chair Shallop asks that the Commission continue to be part of the discussion along with other commissions and groups.

Councilor Hapworth acknowledges sidewalks can be a controversial topic, but notes that the maintenance is the most important part and should be the focus. He thanks the Commission for their feedback.

## **Vision Zero**

Chair Shallop explains that Vision Zero is a program that started in Sweden and is being implemented in cities throughout the world with the goal of ending traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries by a certain date by taking a systemic approach to road safety. This would require working together between various groups within and beyond city government. Chair Shallop would like to see this happen in Salem because of the uptick in

pedestrian traffic incidents and fatalities lately. Chair Shallop notes that federal money can be utilized to help put together a plan to reduce these fatalities and serious injuries. She asks if other Commissioners have any thoughts or feedback.

Vice Chair Papetti thanks staff for the work they do and suggests this would be a great way to get greater buy-in and feedback from the City as a whole. He suggests applying for the Safe Streets and Roads for all grant program as it offers a great framework in addition to funds.

Commissioner Garmendia agrees with the holistic approach and having input from various groups, commissions, and stakeholders.

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

None.

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS SCHEDULE**

The next meeting is scheduled for June 8th, 2022, at 6:00PM.

### **MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

April 13, 2022

April 27, 2022

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Lt. Tucker motions to approve the minutes for the April 13, 2022, and April 27, 2022, meetings of the Traffic and Parking Commission as drafted. Commissioner Papetti seconds the motion. The vote is four (4) in favor and none (0) opposed. **The motion passes.**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

*On a motion duly made by Commissioner Garmendia and seconded by Commissioner Papetti, the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:02 PM.*