

Amy Johnson

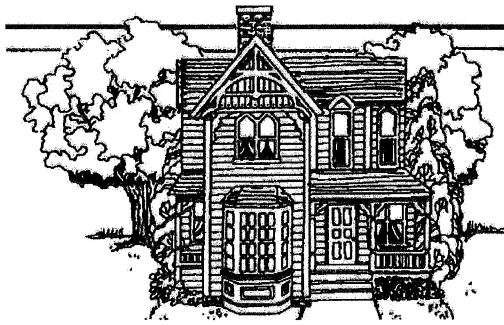
From: Shannon Priem <spriem@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 31, 2018 3:12 PM
To: Chuck Bennett; citycouncil; Lynn Takata; Steve Powers; Peter Fernandez; Lisa Anderson-Ogilvie
Cc: SESNA Board; Darrin SESNA
Subject: SESNA's support letter on State St. Corridor--next steps
Attachments: State St. Corridor July 29 2018 to council.pdf

Categories: Follow-up

Good afternoon, attached is SESNA's thoughtful position to keep up momentum on the State Street project. We are extremely grateful for the time, debate, compromise -- and listening -- on everyone's part. This letter outlines our concerns and positions as we proceed. Thanks for listening.

On a personal note, I've become recently disabled in my left arm, so I'm doing this "single-handed" and would appreciate this being forwarded to folks listed at the end, but I can't access emails for -- Eunice Kim, K. Retherford, N. Wright and N. McDaniel (Darrin, do you mind forwarding, thanks.)

Shannon Priem, Chair
South East Salem NA



SESNA

South East Salem Neighborhood Association
555 Liberty St SE Salem, Oregon 97301 (503) 588-6261

July 30, 2018

Salem Mayor and Council
555 Liberty Street SE, Room 220
Salem, OR 97301

RE: State Street Corridor Plan - Next Steps

Dear Mayor and Councilors:

The State Street corridor is a major gateway to downtown from east Salem and I-5, yet has suffered decades of neglect. The South East Salem Neighborhood Association would like to thank the City of Salem for conducting a thoughtful process and taking a constructive first step to encourage redevelopment of this important corridor!

We encourage Mayor and Council to keep momentum going and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to State Street. In that interest, we recommend these next steps:

Bicyclist Safety

SESNA remains concerned about bicyclist safety along State Street. The approved "Hybrid Option" results in discontinuous bicycling facilities; for the short seven-block stretch between 17th and 24th Streets, there will be no bicycle lanes. Cyclists using State Street will have three options:

- Turn along 17th or 24th and ride a total of 4-6 blocks out of their way to travel 7 blocks east-west.
- Take the right lane. Cyclists can legally take the travel lane where there is no bicycle lane, and occasionally do so along State Street.
- Ride on the sidewalk.

There will be cyclists who do not wish to use Chemeketa or Mill Streets. They may have a destination along State between 17th and 24th. They may be commuters uninterested in a longer, more leisurely trip. They may have other reasons.

Riding on the sidewalk, while legal outside of downtown, will pose a hazard to pedestrians and customers accessing businesses with doors opening onto the sidewalk. Therefore, SESNA believes it best to encourage cyclists who remain on State Street to take the right lane for this short, seven-block stretch.

In order to ensure that motorists are well aware that cyclists are permitted on the road and may ride there, SESNA strongly recommends adding sharrow markings in the right-hand lanes between 17th and 24th Streets. This does not change the existing traffic laws, and serves only to increase motorist awareness.

Should the full "Road Diet" plan be implemented at a later date, providing bicycle lanes, the sharrows can be removed.

Pedestrian Safety

The approved plan makes significant improvements in pedestrian safety, especially the addition of signalized crosswalks at 19th and 21st Streets, and a crossing with a pedestrian island at 15th Street. These are important steps to make crossing State Street safer. The approved 19th and 21st Street crossings, lacking pedestrian islands, are suboptimal solutions. We request that the City explore ways to further enhance pedestrian safety at these intersections.

25th and State Intersection

The intersection at 25th and State is dangerous, with frequent minor accidents. It also does not provide any indication of transition from outer State Street (east of 25th), where the speed limit is 40 to 45 MPH, to inner State Street (west of 25th), where the posted limit is 30 MPH. Westbound traffic on inner State Street often continues at 40 MPH as far as 19th or even 17th Street if it does not encounter a red light. Northbound traffic on 25th Street speeds toward the intersection, hoping to make a left turn before the light changes.

SESNA recommends a study of this intersection, focusing on achieving the following goals:

- Increase safety for all users: Motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians
- Provide a clear transition from high-speed to low-speed sections of State Street
- Serve as a gateway to the inner State Street corridor
- Calm traffic on State and 25th Streets

Floodplain Management and Open Space

Flooding is a problem along State Street. The north side of State between 18th and 21st, and the south side between 18th and 23rd, are within the 100-year floodplain. Many of the buildings on these properties flooded in 2012.

Buildings that flood are subject to high and increasing flood insurance costs. Worse, following a flood comes expensive, business-disrupting repairs. This makes these buildings less desirable and therefore less valuable. The building at 1919-1949 State Street, for example, has been vacant since the 2012 flood and has seen its value plummet (per Marion County Assessor Real Market Value).

SESNA recommends that the City of Salem consider for acquisition or public-private partnership the properties along State Street that are within the 100-year floodplain, especially on the south side of State between 19th and 21st Streets and 1919-1949 State Street on the north side.

The City should explore how these properties can be thoughtfully redeveloped with a mix of public open space, concessions such as a canoe/kayak rental, and other businesses. New buildings should take full advantage of the beautiful creekside location, rather than turning their backs to it and blocking it from public view or access. Site design should create an interesting and active place for customers and for the general public. Buildings should be elevated above the floodplain, and the remainder of the property designed to accommodate flood storage.

Michael Slater recently proposed that the City of Salem acquire a vacant lot on the south side of State Street adjacent to Mill Creek for future park use. SESNA fully supports this proposed acquisition as a first step.

Urban Renewal

SESNA realizes that infrastructure projects and property acquisitions have associated costs, and that tax increment financing is one way to help fund such projects. SESNA asks Mayor and Council to immediately prioritize the State Street corridor between 12th and 25th Streets for any Urban Renewal Area acreage that becomes available.

Parking Study

SESNA supports the staff recommendation to conduct a parking management study for the west end of the corridor. Major employers with facilities in the area, such as Salem-Keizer School District, the State of Oregon, Willamette University, and Salem Health, should be included in discussions as potential partners in developing solutions.


East-West Traffic Study

SESNA recommends the City undertake a holistic traffic study to explore how east-west traffic can best be accommodated. Analysis should include existing arterials and neighborhood streets as components of the grid. Consider creative solutions and projects that improve traffic flow on existing streets without widening, such as reducing driveways on arterials, adding right-turn lanes, and enhancing intersections.

Rather than attempting to eliminate rush hour cut-through traffic in neighborhoods, which serves only to increase congestion on arterials, SESNA recommends a focus on traffic calming in neighborhoods. The concern for SESNA is not commuters using "our" streets, but people driving on local streets at arterial speeds. Traffic calming to limit speeds to 15-20 MPH on local streets would mitigate most negative impacts of rush hour cut-through traffic.

We look forward to continuing to partner with the City of Salem, North East Neighbors, and other stakeholders to resolve these matters as State Street redevelops into the great place it can be.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannon Priem".

Shannon Priem, Chair

cc: L. Takata, Chair, NEN
N. McDaniel, Land-Use Chair, NEN
N. Wright, City of Salem
L. Anderson-Ogilvie, City of Salem
E. Kim, City of Salem
K. Retherford, City of Salem
S. Powers, City of Salem
P. Fernandez, City of Salem