



**Staff Report**

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**TO:** Mayor and City Council  
**THROUGH:** Steve Powers, City Manager  
**FROM:** Peter Fernandez, PE, Public Works Director

**SUBJECT:**

Updated Feasibility Study of temporarily closing portions of Union and Winter Streets NE on Saturdays between May and October to benefit area neighborhoods and the Salem Saturday Market.

Ward(s): Ward 1  
Councilor(s): Stapleton  
Neighborhood(s): CANDO  
Service Area(s): Welcome and Livable Neighborhood

**SUMMARY:**

This report provides additional information requested by City Council for the closure of portions of Union and Winter Streets NE.

**ISSUE:**

Options for temporarily closing Union and Winter Streets on Saturdays during the months of May through October to benefit area neighborhoods and the Saturday Market.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Information only.

**FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

On April 26, 2021, City Council directed staff to provide a report regarding the feasibility of temporarily closing Union Street from the pedestrian bridge at Riverfront Park to Winter Street NE, and Winter Street NE from Union Street NE to Market Street NE.

Per Council’s motion, the closures would occur on Saturdays from May through October to “enrich

the lives of residents, enhance the quality of neighborhoods, and support the local economy.” The intent of the street closures would reduce vehicular traffic and provide safer passage for pedestrians and bicycle riders from west Salem, downtown Salem, and north Salem to the Saturday Market.

Public Works staff developed two street closure options. The options vary primarily on the type of barricades used and signage. Attachment 1 provides a comparison between Type II and Type III barricades that are considered in the two options. Attachments 2 through 6 show how the barricades and signs would be employed on the various affected street segments for both options.

## Summary of Options.

### Option #1 - Soft Closure.

*Overview.* This option consists of signs mounted on Type II barricades informing motorists that the road is closed except for local access.

*Advantages of Option #1.* This option is the least impactful to vehicular traffic traveling to and from adjacent businesses and homes. Cherriots Route #2 currently uses Winter Street NE and a section of Union Street NE between Winter Street NE and Church Street NE and this option allows bus service to continue. From an operational perspective, Option #1 is the easiest of the two options to set up and take down and is, therefore, the least cost option. This option requires a crew of two, requires about 6.5 hours of work time to load materials, set-up, and then tear-down the closure. The estimated cost for Option #1 is \$680 each time it is implemented.

*Disadvantages of Option #1.* This option does not physically preclude vehicles from entering a road segment, relying instead on driver awareness and compliance with the temporarily posted signs.

### Option #2 - Hard Closure.

*Overview.* This option consists of a combination of Type III barricades, traffic cones, and signs prohibiting right hand and left hand turns onto the isolated streets.

*Advantages of Option #2.* This option would be more effective at reducing vehicular traffic on the streets than Option #1 because it physically blocks most traffic at the intersection, thereby making it the most beneficial to the walking and biking public.

*Disadvantages of Option #2.* Because this option is intended to prevent vehicular traffic on the impacted streets, it could create problems and may have an adverse impact to some adjacent businesses and homes. Option #2 would also require Cherriots to reroute Route #2, which could create difficulties for the transiting public who would otherwise use the impacted bus

stops. From an operational perspective, Option #2 is the most expensive of the two options to implement. This option requires a crew of four, would involve about 6.5 hours of work time to load materials, set-up, and then tear-down the closure. The estimated cost for Option #2 is \$1,360 each time it is implemented.

Option #1 is generally used in Salem for events that require short-term closures of streets. This is because this option provides a balance between access needs of adjacent businesses and homes with the need to reduce vehicular traffic in support of the event. Either option can be supplemented with volunteers, contracted flaggers, or police services to help enforce compliance with signs and to facilitate crossings at intersections. Both options require advance notification to potentially impacted businesses and property owners and, depending on the scale and scope of the closures, to the general travelling public.

#### Street classifications and stop controls.

Union Street NE is classified as a collector street in the Salem *Transportation System Plan* (Salem TSP). All the intersections on Union Street NE between Front Street NE and Market Street NE are either stop controlled or signalized.

Winter Street NE is classified as a local street in the Salem TSP. All Winter Street movements are stop controlled except at E Street and at Belmont Street. At these two intersections the side street is stop controlled.

#### Operating days and hours.

The Saturday Market operates from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and is scheduled to operate through October 30, 2021. The closures would be set up on Saturdays only.

The closures would be effective beginning at 8 a.m. and would be removed by 4 p.m.

#### Potentially impacted businesses and residences

There are 11 business that only have access to Union Street or Winter Street. It is unclear how many are open on Saturdays. There are 63 residences that only have access to Union Street or Winter Street.

The two options with supporting information were originally presented in an information report to Council on July 12, 2021. The contents of that report have been carried forward in this report. Questions raised at the July 12 Council meeting are addressed below:

#### *How many businesses are open on Saturdays?*

There are three businesses open on Saturdays that could be potentially impacted by street closures. The Gilbert House Children's Museum is one of the three. Also potentially impacted by street closures would be Riverfront Park's north parking lot.

*What is Cherriot's response to the proposed street closure options?*

Cherriots has indicated it can support either option. For Option #2, the agency would reroute its buses using Capitol and Summer Streets. Cherriots would temporarily close the bus stops on Winter Street and direct customers to use the bus stops on Capitol and Summer Streets.

*The north-south streets go through the east-west streets. How helpful or dangerous is this to people going east-west?*

All intersections on Union Street (except Liberty Street) are either signalized or stop-controlled. This should maintain safe crossings because traffic using the controlled side streets will either have to be stopped before proceeding or will have to obey the signal that assigns who can proceed through the intersection. The one intersection that may be a concern is Union Street at Liberty Street where Liberty Street traffic does not stop.

*How does this proposal build on work already done, such as the Saturday Market, Winter-Maple bikeway, and Union Street Bridge?*

This proposal helps connect bicyclists and pedestrians to other bicycle and pedestrian improvements. In 2022, the City will be installing buffered bike lanes and some curb extensions on Union Street to improve the bicycle and pedestrian connections. A traffic signal at Union Street and Liberty Street will also be constructed.

*How long would it take to implement either of the options?*

Option 1 could be implemented on the Saturday immediately following approval from Council.

Option 2 will require an additional week to implement. This is because Option 2 requires securing additional equipment and the additional time needed to post parking prohibitions on the affected streets to ensure parked vehicles will not be trapped within the street closure.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Street closures to reduce or eliminate vehicular traffic in support of an event are common practices. The nature of street closures varies depending characteristics of the event, the required control of vehicles on the closed road segments (for example, "Road Closed" vs. "Local Access Only"), and the acceptable impact to businesses, homes, and the transiting public. It is the responsibility of the event sponsor to reimburse the City for the cost of implementing a street closure, which is typically based on the number of staff and the time required to assemble, setup, tear down, and restock material.

Robert D. Chandler, PhD, PE  
Assistant Public Works Director

### Attachments:

1. Type II and Type III Barricades
2. Union between Cottage and Winter
3. Union between Front and Liberty

4. Union between High and Church
5. Winder between Belmont and Market
6. Winter between D and E