



# CITY OF PROVIDENCE

## MAYOR BRETT P. SMILEY

### GREEN AND COMPLETE STREETS ADVISORY COUNCIL

#### DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

#### Meeting of the Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council

December 4, 2023, 4:30 PM

First Floor Conference Room, Doorley Building, 444 Westminster Street, Providence RI, 02903

**Overseeing Body:** City of Providence Department of Planning and Development

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Voting members present: Rosie Jaswal, Kathleen Gannon, Alana Deluty, Doug Johnson

Non-voting Ex-Officio members present: Alex Ellis, Cpt. Luis SanLucas, Nate Urso

Ms. Jaswal called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

Following roll call, Ms. Jaswal introduced item #2, the consent agenda, containing the minutes from the November 20, 2023 meeting. Ms. Gannon moved approval, and Mr. Johnson seconded. All voted in favor. Ms. Jaswal moved on to the next agenda item, overview of review procedure. Mr. Ellis gave this overview.

Ms. Jaswal moved on to the next agenda item, an update on the status of the proposed amendment to the Green and Complete Streets Ordinance. Mr. Ellis provided the update that the amendment had passed the City Council Ordinance Committee. No motions were made.

Ms. Jaswal moved on to the next agenda item, an update on implementation of the Advisory Council's recommendations for pedestrian safety improvements at traffic signals. Mr. Ellis gave some background, and asked Mr. Urso for updates on the status of implementation of Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs). Mr. Urso said 19 LPIs had been installed to date and he expected the pace to increase as no significant congestion has resulted so far. The standard duration of the LPIs installed is 5 seconds, but right turn restrictions are not yet being implemented simultaneously; Ms. Jaswal encouraged that coordinated installation to be made standard practice. Mr. Ellis then described recent changes to the traffic signal at the intersection of Empire Street and Weybosset Street, which previously had the pedestrian phase come on automatically ("pedestrian recall"), but which was recently removed. Mr. Urso clarified that the change was separate from the installation of LPI at the intersection, and provided background on the changes: the Providence Performing Arts Center (PPAC) and the Administration had asked him to evaluate traffic congestion following shows at the venue, from Richmond Street to Dave Gavitt Way, and whether pedestrian recall was a significant factor causing congestion. Mr. Urso said that the traffic engineering analysis he conducted indicated that the traffic congestion was primarily caused at the intersection of Dave Gavitt Way and Broad Street, and he recommended that changes to pedestrian recall focus on that intersection. He stated that the Administration instead instructed him to remove the "pedestrian recall" safety features at all of the intersections in

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the study area. Members of the Advisory Council emphasized to Mr. Urso how the lack of pedestrian recall at the intersection created a hazard for users of the urban trail, and made recommendations for improvements that could address the issue. Mr. Urso noted that some improvements he was evaluating were beyond the City's in-house capability, such as replacing one of the traffic signals at the intersection with a "four ball" light that included the right-turn arrow on the mast-arm. Mr. Urso committed to ensuring that:

- the protected right-turn phase from Empire Street onto Broad Street was a separate phase from the through phase,
- originally-installed "Bikes Use Pedestrian Signal" signage was replaced,
- a graphical "no right turn on red arrow" sign be installed, and
- a "no right turn on red arrow" sign be installed on the mast-arm.

Mr. Urso also committed to advocating with the Administration to return the intersection to pedestrian recall. Ms. Deluty suggested that some PPAC parking for could be shifted to parking garages in the Jewelry District so the congestion on Weybosset Street and Broad Street is reduced. A member of the public in attendance also suggested that PPAC could pay for a traffic detail to ensure safe crossing for pedestrians during heavy traffic caused by their shows and to mitigate congestion somewhat. Finally, Mr. Ellis asked Mr. Urso to clarify how Traffic Engineering views the balance between mitigating traffic congestion and ensuring pedestrian and bicycle safety. Mr. Urso described a need to understand that vulnerable road users such as bicyclists and pedestrians are the priority, and that there would need to be significant congestion to override that priority. He defined significant congestion as "something that you might notice", "cycle failure" when cars need to wait more than 2 phases to get through a light, or when the volume-to-capacity ratio of an intersection is higher than 1 or 1.1. No motions were made.

Ms. Jaswal moved on to the next agenda item, Announcements, Staff Updates, and Public Comment. Mr. Ellis reminded members of the impending expiration of their terms on the Advisory Council and the process for re-appointment. He also provided updates on three major upcoming projects: the Woonasquatucket River Greenway construction would be starting in the spring, the Waterplace Park Resiliency planning project was out to bid and due back on December 18, and the Safe Streets for All solicitation for design services would likely be put out in December as well. After brief discussion and announcements, Ms. Jaswal adjourned the meeting at 5:37 PM.

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Respectfully submitted by Alex Ellis.

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