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REPORT TO MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Matthew R. Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services,
& Special Projects

DATE: October 26, 2021

SUBJECT: Narrow Streets Parking Study - Zone 1 Wall Street Neighborhood
Proposed Parking Ordinance Amendments

Recommendation:

1. Set the attached ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances; Title II, Traffic Code; Chapter 18, Parking, Article 18-1, Stopping, Standing and Parking, Section 18-1-6, Parking Prohibited at All Times in Designated Places, Schedule I, for public hearing on December 13, 2021.

The purpose of this ordinance is to modify parking on certain narrow streets.

2. Set the attached ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Traffic Code; Chapter 18, Parking, Article 18-1, Stopping, Standing and Parking Section 18-1-7(a), Parking Prohibited Certain Hours in Designated Places, Schedule II for public hearing on December 13, 2021.

The purpose of this ordinance is to remove provisions pertaining to parking on the south side of Thompson and Thorndike Streets from Schedule II, as parking will no longer be permitted at these locations.

3. Set the attached ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances; Title II, Traffic Code; Chapter 18, Parking, Article 18-1, Stopping, Standing and Parking, Section 18-1-7.1, c, Parking Prohibited During Certain Hours and Months in Designated Places, Schedule IX, for public hearing on December 13, 2021; and,

The purpose of this ordinance is to automatic winter parking restrictions on Lincoln and Marshall Streets from January 1 – March 15th annually.

4. Set the attached ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances; Title II, Traffic Code; Chapter 18, Parking, Article 18-1, Stopping, Standing and Parking, Section 18-1-8, Parking Time Limited in Designated Places, Schedule III, for public hearing on December 13, 2021; and,

The purpose of this amendment is to make the Code of Ordinances consistent with actual parking conditions on Marshall Street, as well as to remove Oak Street from the Code of Ordinances in accordance with the Parking Committee’s narrow streets recommendations related thereto.

5. Set the attached ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances; Title II, Traffic Code; Chapter 17, Vehicles and Traffic, Article 17-4, Operation of Motor Vehicles, Section 17-4-3, One-Way Streets, Schedule VI.

The purpose of this amendment is to make the Code of Ordinances consistent with one-way traffic patterns currently existing on Chesley Street (Pleasant to Wall) and Oak Street.

Background:

In January 2017, the Parking Committee initiated a comprehensive review of narrow streets located in Wards 4, 5, and 6. The study area was predominately focused on the neighborhoods located to the south, west, and north of the Downtown Central Business District.

This effort was initiated in response to growing resident concerns and complaints regarding a variety of parking issues. These included: difficulty accessing / egressing driveways, safe travel on narrow streets when snow banks are present and vehicles are parked, the City’s ability to effectively and efficiently clear snow from certain narrow streets, as well as the ability for emergency service vehicles to safely and efficiently navigate narrow streets when vehicles are parked.

To be considered a “narrow street”, a road must have a travel way less than 12’ wide when vehicles are parked. This concept is articulated in Section 18-1-1 and Section 18-1-4 (a) of the City’s Codes of Ordinances. The graphics below explain minimum pavement widths in order to comply with these Ordinances.

**Figure 1: 20’ Minimum Pavement Width
(Low Traffic Volume Streets; Room to Pass 2 Vehicles is Not Critical; Parking 1 Side Only)**

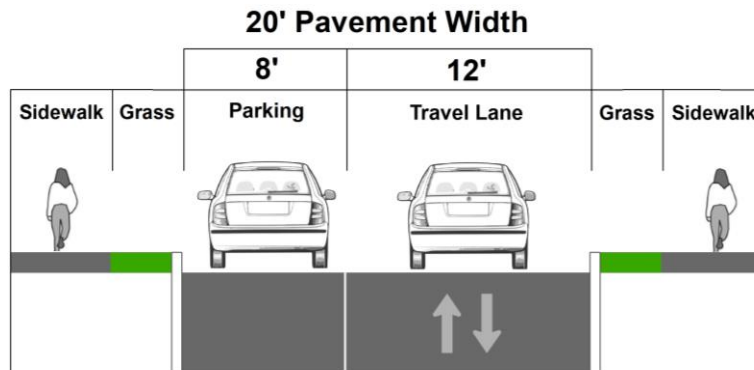


Figure 2: 28' Minimum Pavement Width
 (Low Traffic Volume Streets; Room to Pass 2 Vehicles is Not Critical; Parking Both Sides)

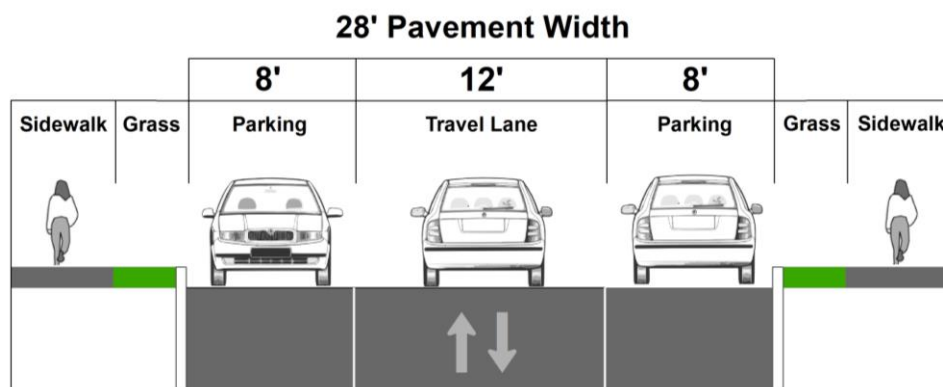
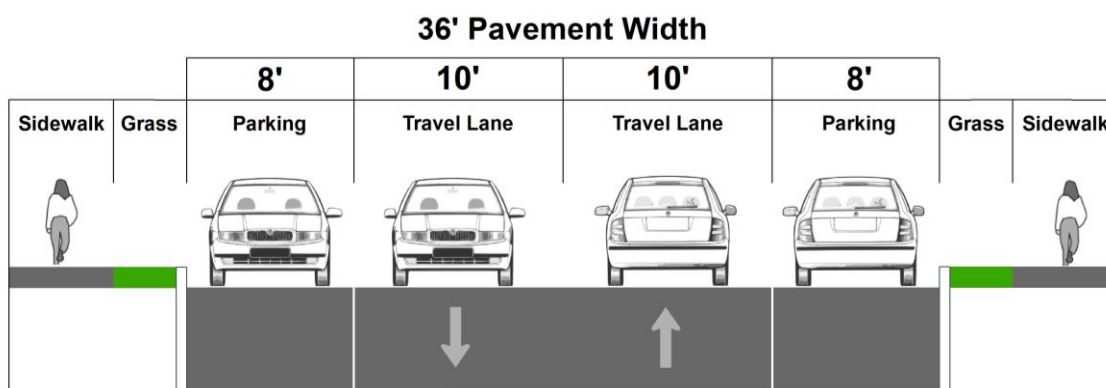


Figure 3: 36' Minimum Pavement Width
 (Low Traffic Volume Streets; Room to Pass 2 Vehicles Required; Parking Both Sides)



Working with staff, the Parking Committee identified and reviewed approximately 143 narrow street segments within the study area. Of this total, approximately 84 were of potential concern. Please see Maps 1 and 2 attached to this report for more information.

In order to make review process manageable, the Parking Committee subdivided the study area into 4 separate zones. These zones are as follows, and are depicted on Map 2 attached to this report.

Zone #	General Description	North Boundary	South Boundary	East Boundary	West Boundary
1	Wall Street Neighborhood	Pleasant St.	West St.	South State St.	South Spring St.
2	City Hall Neighborhood	Centre St.	Pleasant St.	Storrs St.	Liberty St.
3	UNH School of Law / White Park	Franklin St.	Centre St.	North Main St.	Liberty St.
4	Old North Cemetery Neighborhood	Curtice Ave.	Franklin St.	Prospect St.	Liberty St.

Review of Zones 2, 3, and 4 were completed 2018 and 2019. Zone 1 was originally scheduled to be completed in early 2020; however, the process was delayed due to the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic in March 2020.

Discussion:

Initially, twenty (20) street segments of concern were identified in Zone 1 for review. However, Morton Street was subsequently added to the project as a result of public input received from the community.

The Parking Committee employed a comprehensive process to review these streets, as well as secure neighborhood input related thereto, as follows:

1. *Community Forum #1:* An initial community forum was held on August 30, 2021 at the City Council Chambers to discuss issues surrounding narrow streets, as well as to secure public input and potential recommendations on the street segments of concern. A written notice was mailed to all owners of property located within Zone 1. The forum was also advertised on the City's website, social media, and local media.
2. *Subcommittee Development of Draft Recommendations:* The Parking Committee formed a subcommittee to review public feedback and potential recommendations presented at the initial community forum. This process included a tour of all 21 street segments, which occurred on October 1, 2021. The Subcommittee then proposed draft recommendations, which were reviewed by the full Parking Committee on October 19, 2021.
3. *Community Forum #2:* The Parking Committee held a second community forum on October 25, 2021 to present the Committee's final recommendations. Similar to the initial forum, all property owners were notified, and the forum was promoted on social media and the City's website.
4. *Parking Committee Final Review:* Immediately following the second community forum, it was the consensus of the Parking Committee to submit these proposed ordinance changes to City Council for public hearing.

The Parking Committee is recommending changes to 18 of the 21 street segments of concern. Please see attached spreadsheet, as well as PowerPoint Presentation from October 25, 2021, which summarizes all proposed parking changes.

The Parking Committee felt that these recommendations represented the least impact possible to the neighborhood, while simultaneously balancing the concerns relative to vehicular and pedestrian safety, as well as delivery of municipal services including fire and emergency medical services, snow removal, and rubbish pick-up.

In addition to implementing the Parking Committee's recommendations, the attached ordinances also correct inconsistencies between the Code of Ordinances and actual traffic and parking regulations currently posted in the field, which were identified by staff during the review process.