



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: David Florence, Parking Manager
Robert J. Mack, PE, PTOE, Traffic Engineer

DATE: April 29, 2013

SUBJECT: Report from Parking Enforcement and Engineering Services with a recommendation to amend the Code of Ordinances to revise and expand the location of on-street parking restriction along portions of South Street, Conant Drive, Winant Street, Bow Street and Carter Street.

Recommendation

Accept this report and set a public hearing to amend the Code of Ordinances to revise the location of on-street parking restrictions in the vicinity of Abbot-Downing School as follows:

1. Amend Parking Schedule I, Parking Prohibited at All Times, to remove the restriction on the South/West side of Conant Drive from Springfield Street to Conant Street;
2. Amend Parking Schedule Ia, No Parking, Stopping or Standing at All Times; to add the restriction to the south side of Conant Drive from Springfield Street to Conant Street; and
3. Amend Parking Schedule IX, Parking Prohibited and Time Restricted During Certain Hours and Months in Designated Places, by adding a new section IX(c), Parking, Stopping, Standing Prohibited During Certain Hours and Months in Designated Places [7-9 AM and 4-6 PM Weekdays September-June], and adding the restriction to portions of: South Street (Coolidge to north of Conant); Conant Drive (Winant to South); Winant Street (Conant to Rundlett); Bow Street (South to Stone); and Carter Street (165 ft easterly of South).

Background

On October 9, 2012, City Council referred a request to the Traffic Operations Committee (TOC) to consider establishing a No Parking/Stopping/Standing zone along Conant Drive from South Street to Rundlett Street. At issue was traffic operation and safety concerns of short-term on-street parking and standing during Abbot-Downing School drop-off/pick up times. Over the following months, Engineering and Parking Enforcement staff investigated the extent and causes of the adverse on-street parking issue and explored, with Concord School District staff, potential ways to improve on-campus parking and traffic circulation to

make on-campus parking more attractive than parking along neighborhood streets. In February 2013, TOC referred its findings and preliminary recommendations for parking restrictions to the Parking Committee for further consideration. On March 25, 2013, the Parking Committee convened its regular meeting at Abbot-Downing School to consider the item further and, pursuant to an invitation to residents in the Conant Drive/South Street area, received further support for area parking restrictions. The proposed area-parking restrictions were fully endorsed by the Parking Committee on April 15, 2013, and by the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) on April 25, 2013.

Discussion

In October 2013, staff and TOC began investigating potential safety and traffic operation issues in the vicinity of the South/Conant intersection during school peak times, and particularly during the afternoon student pick-up period. A significant number of vehicles park along the shoulders here rather than park on the school campus. Parking on the west side of South Street near the corners of the South/Conant intersection compromises sight distance for the heavy volume of Conant Drive traffic trying to turn out onto South Street (most of which are exiting from the school campus and turning left). Vehicles also park along the north side of Conant drive just west of the South Street intersection, and due to the narrow width of Conant Drive, restrict two-way traffic on Conant Drive to a single lane width. This becomes problematic when eastbound traffic queues back from the South Street intersection, and westbound traffic is unable to proceed because of the parked vehicles. Another safety concern is the boarding of children into street-parked vehicles. Some parents with children: cross at mid-block locations to parked cars rather than use crosswalks; cross from between parked cars; and board vehicles from the side of the vehicle facing the street (especially problematic with snow banking along the side of the street).

A similar concern with drop-off/pick-up parkers was considered by TOC last year further west on Conant Drive by the crosswalk to the pathway to the school. At issue were cars parking on or next to the crosswalk and on grass lawn areas. That issue had been addressed in the interim by the Parking Committee by the placement of temporary No Parking signs (paper signs). At the time, the committee began its discussion about possible installation of permanent signage at this crosswalk area. Illegal parking along South Street along the new school frontage had been a substantial issue following the opening of the new school, but enforcement efforts in fall 2012 have been successful in minimizing this occurrence. In the past, Engineering has also received complaints about school-related traffic parking along the sides of Bow Street and on residents' grass fronting the street.

On-campus congestion and delay, particularly during the Abbot-Downing School dismissal, appears to be the primary contributing factor for the prevalence of short-term on-street parking. The student pick-up/drop-off lane on campus fills with vehicles, with overflow vehicles blocking access to the parking area and occasionally spilling out into South Street, impeding traffic flow along this major collector street. Over the winter months, Engineering and Police Department staff worked with Concord School District staff to explore measures to encourage more afternoon pick-up traffic to park on campus rather than on surrounding residential streets. Measures tried included school notices to parents/guardians and some changes in bus loading locations. Follow-up staff observations, however, indicate little change to the on-street parking issue.

At its February 19, 2013 meeting, TOC felt that school staff efforts to better-manage on-campus traffic, by themselves, would likely not mitigate the prevalent practice of on-street

parking near the campus. Some formal parking restriction to prevent ongoing safety and operational issues, coupled with school efforts to better manage on-campus parking, appears to be an appropriate course of action. As such, TOC concurred with an initial recommendation to restrict parking in the vicinity of the South/Conant intersection, including along Conant Drive westerly to Rundlett Street. The restriction would consider a time limit during school peaks only, so that on-street parking generally remains available for the neighborhood at all other times. The TOC forwarded its recommendation to the Parking Committee.

On February 25, 2013, the Parking Committee generally endorsed TOC's initial recommendation but felt that the extent of restriction might need to be increased, understanding that restricting parking in one location will act to divert on-street parkers to another area up the street. Neighborhood input was sought at the Parking Committee's March 25, 2013 meeting held at Abbot-Downing School with attendees including: committee members; several City Councilors; Parking, Engineering and Police staff; and six area residents of the 53 addressees notified by letter. Meeting attendees endorsed the expansion of parking restrictions to include all of Conant Drive near the campus, South Street southerly to at least Coolidge Street, and westerly portions of Bow and Carter Street. The resulting area parking restrictions are illustrated on the attached plan. This plan was unanimously endorsed by the Parking Committee at its April 15, 2013 meeting.

TPAC also considered this matter at its April 25, 2013 meeting and fully endorsed the proposed parking restrictions, noting safety as its primary concern. TPAC also stressed that the school district must increase its efforts to improve on-campus traffic management and parent education to make accommodation for additional vehicles after the parking restrictions go into effect. It was noted that if approved by Council, the new parking restrictions would go into effect prior to the start of the fall semester, allowing the school staff time over the summer to develop the necessary traffic management and education plan.

Installation of signs to indicate the parking restrictions on the attached map would be done by General Services. Staff estimates that approximately 33 new or revised-existing sign/post assemblies would be needed, with material and labor cost estimated to be about \$6,000.

Attachment: Proposed Parking Restriction Map

cc: Parking Committee
Traffic Operations Committee
John Duval, Police Chief
Carlos Baia, Deputy City Manager – Development
Chip Chesley, General Services
Matt Cashman, Concord School District