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REPORT TO MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL

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

DATE: March 26, 2019

SUBJECT: Narrow Streets Parking Study
Zone 3 (UNH School of Law / White Park Neighborhood)
Proposed Parking Ordinance Amendments

Recommendation:

- Accept the following report; and,
- 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 May 13, 2019.

The intent of this Ordinance is to remove on-street parking on the following streets: Cambridge (south side only), Chapel, Gordon Court (south side only), Perry Avenue, and Rowell.

- 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 May 13, 2019.

The intent of this Ordinance is to remove on-street parking on the following streets from January 1 – March 15: Academy, Essex (Washington to Centre), Jackson (Washington to Tremont), and Montgomery (North State to curve 250' west of North State).

- 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 (One Way Streets) for public hearing on May 13, 2019.

The intent of this Ordinance is to convert Academy Street to one-way traffic (south bound).

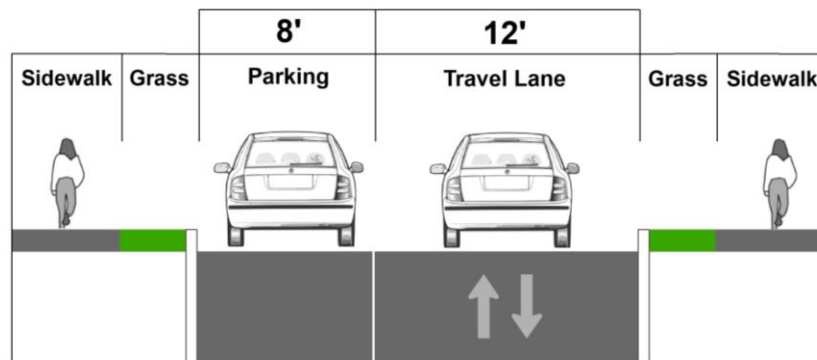
Background:

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.

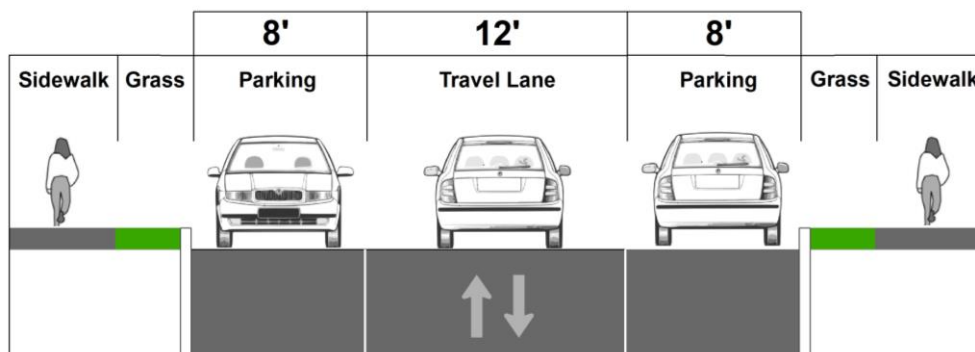
This effort was initiated in response to growing resident complaints and concerns regarding a variety of parking issues. These included: difficulty accessing / egressing driveways, safe travel on narrow streets when snow banks are present and vehicles are parked, the City’s ability to effectively and 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 less than 12’ of travel way for vehicular travel whenever vehicles are parked on the roadway. This concept is articulated in Section 18-1-1 and Section 18-1-4 of the City’s Codes of Ordinances. The graphics below explain minimum pavement widths in order to comply with these Ordinances.

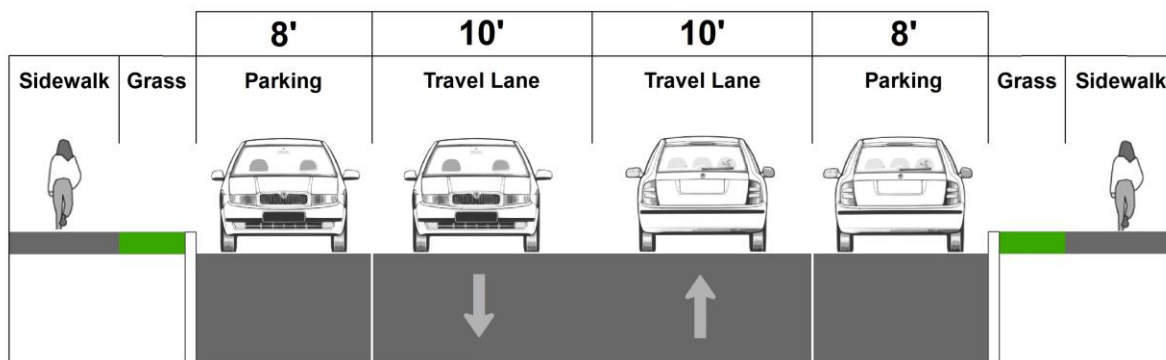
**Figure 1: 20’ Minimum Pavement Width
(Low Traffic Volume Streets; Room to Pass 2 Vehicles is Not Critical; Parking 1 Side Only)
20’ Pavement Width**



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



**Figure 3: 36' Minimum Pavement Width
(Low Traffic Volume Streets; Room to Pass 2 Vehicles Required; Parking 1 Side Only)
36' Pavement Width**



Working with City staff, the Parking Committee identified and studied 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.	Storrs St.	South Spring St.
2	City Hall Neighborhood	Centre St.	Pleasant St.	Storrs St.	Liberty St.
3	UNH School of Law / White Park	Beacon St.	Centre St.	North Main St.	Liberty St.
4	Old North Cemetery Neighborhood	Curtice Ave.	Beacon St.	Prospect St.	Liberty St.

Discussion:

The Parking Committee chose to begin the Narrow Street Project by focusing its efforts on Zone 3 (i.e. UNH School of Law / White Park Neighborhood). A total of 15 streets of potential concern were identified in this neighborhood.

The Parking Committee employed a comprehensive strategy to review these streets, as well as secure neighborhood input. In addition to neighborhood forums, this process, outlined below, also included several meetings with representatives of the UNH School of Law to review the university’s impact on neighborhood parking.

1. *Community Forum #1*: An initial community forum was held at UNH School of Law to discuss issues surrounding narrow streets, as well as secure public input on the 15 streets of concern and potential recommendations associated therewith. All property owners in Zone 3 neighborhood (approximately 400 in total) were notified. 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 potential recommendations presented at the initial community forum, and public feedback related thereto. This process included a tour of all 15 streets. The Subcommittee then proposed draft recommendations for the full Parking Committee's review.
3. Parking Committee Review of Subcommittee Recommendations: The Parking Committee reviewed the Subcommittee's draft recommendations and developed consensus regarding final recommendations.
4. Community Forum #2: The Parking Committee held a second community forum on January 28, 2019 to present the Committee's final recommendations. Like the initial forum, all property owners were notified, and the forum was promoted on social media and the City's website.
5. Parking Committee Final Review: The Parking Committee met on March 25, 2019 and voted to submit its recommendations to the City Council for public hearing.

Copies of the October 22 and January 28th presentations are attached to this report.

After completing this comprehensive process, the Parking Committee is recommending changes to 9 of the 15 streets of concern, affecting approximately 84 parking spaces, as follows:

- Eliminate On-Street Parking:
 - Cambridge Street (south side only; 9+/- parking spaces affected);
 - Chapel Street (5+/- parking spaces affected);
 - Gordon Court (south side only; 4+/- parking spaces affected);
 - Perry Avenue (14+/- spaces affected); and,
 - Rowell Street (5+/- spaces affected).
- Winter Parking Ban (January 1 – March 15th):
 - Academy Street (11 spaces affected);
 - Essex Street (Washington to Centre) (17 spaces affected);
 - Jackson Street (Washington to Tremont) (15 spaces affected); and,
 - Montgomery Street (4 spaces affected).
- 1 Way Conversion:
 - Academy Street (convert to 1 way south bound).

The Parking Committee felt that these recommendations represented the least impact possible to the neighborhood, while simultaneously balancing the concerns relative to public safety, safe and efficient movement of traffic, safe access by emergency response vehicles, as well as safe and effective delivery of municipal services (such as snow removal).

Please see the Table 1, attached to this report, for complete details regarding these streets, as well as other reviewed in the Zone 3 Study Area.

Other potential recommendations, which were identified by the Parking Committee during its work within the Zone 3 Neighborhood, included the following:

- UNH School of Law - Public Use of School Parking Lots: Neighborhood residents expressed strong interest in securing public access UNH's surface parking lots. UNH School of Law understands this desire and is interested in allowing public access to their Rumford Street Parking Lot. Discussions are ongoing with UNH Law regarding implementation of this program.
- White Park Permit Parking Program: Neighborhood residents expressed interest in a permit parking program, which would permit UNH Law faculty and students as well as neighborhood residents, to park within the White Park Parking Lot. Working with City Administration, the Parking Committee reviewed this request and determined there are two primary challenges associated therewith.

First, deed restrictions associated with Armenia White's conveyance of White Park to the City required that the property be used for a public purpose. Past interpretations of this language had concluded that a permit parking program would constitute a private use of park property, and, thus, would not be permitted. However, recent guidance provided by the Attorney General's Office indicates that a permit parking program would not violate these covenants provided that the net revenues generated by the sale of permits is 1) held in a special fund and 2) exclusively reinvested into White Park.

Secondly, and more problematic, are deed restrictions associated with the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program. LWCF is a federal grant program, administered by the State of New Hampshire, which the City has used to finance numerous improvements to White Park. The program requires that any properties, which have benefited from the LWCF program be used for public recreational purposes in perpetuity. Guidance provided by the federal government indicates that a permit parking program would constitute private use of the property. Therefore, in order to implement a permit program, the City would need to replace that portion of White Park associated with the permit parking program at the City's expense.

For these reasons, City Administration does not recommend that the City pursue a permit parking program at White Park at this time.