



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Karen Hill, PE
Transportation Engineer

DATE: December 22, 2021

SUBJECT: Report from the Transportation Engineer on behalf of the Traffic Operations Committee in response to a referral from City Council regarding a petition for the City to examine traffic speeds, visibility exiting driveways, and illegal parking on Christian Avenue.

Recommendation

Accept this report.

Background

During its August 9, 2021, the City Council referred a petition from residents of Havenwood Heritage Heights (HHH) to Traffic Operations Committee (TOC) and Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) which requested that the City review traffic speeds, driveway visibility, and illegal parking on Christian Avenue.

TOC discussed the petition at their August 17, 2021 and September 21, 2021 meetings. Representatives of HHH attended both meetings, and suggested that the City relocate all on-street parking to the south side of Christian Avenue. The representatives of HHH thought this would be appropriate as they believe the majority of the vehicles using on-street parking belong to residents from the Royal Gardens apartment complex, which is located along the south side of Christian Avenue.

The complaints contained in HHH's petition are similar to those received by the City from HHH dating back to 1976. Historically, parking concerns on Christian Ave are raised periodically, typically when staff or residents turn over at the facility. Please see the attached timeline for reference.

Prior to the current petition, parking issues on Christian Avenue were last formally raised by HHH in 2013. At that time, the concerns were reviewed by the Parking Committee, as well as the Traffic Operations Committee. After review, on July 14, 2014, City Council approved Ordinances #2931 and 2932, which amended two blanket ordinances regarding driveway setbacks for on-street parking. The purpose of these amendments was to grant additional flexibility to address driveway setback concerns like those raised by HHH.

Simultaneously with passing these ordinances, the City agreed to expand setbacks at all HHH driveways. Specifically, setbacks were made either 20' from a driveway without a stop sign or 30' from a driveway with a stop sign, as those were (are) the maximum setbacks permitted by City Ordinance. These setbacks are consistent with City-wide roadway intersections, as opposed to the 5' standard setbacks for driveways. Signage designating the expanded setbacks was installed in late summer 2014.

In response to HHH's 2013 request, the Concord Police Department researched the accident history which showed five accidents from 2011 to 2014, and four of those accidents involved HHH driveways with the largest parking setbacks in excess of 30 feet.

During its review of HHH's 2013 request, TOC concurred that the parking setbacks from HHH driveways, which were in existence at the time, were appropriate and exiting driveways could be performed safely with appropriate driver action. TOC also noted concern for establishing precedent in spot-increasing parking setbacks from that otherwise specified in the Ordinance. Regarding moving the parking to the south side, it was concluded that the heavier-used driveways to/from Royal Gardens would become subject to the same limited sight lines.

In November 2017, the City collected traffic and speed data on Christian Ave in response to a referral from Councilor Bouchard in regards to a resident concern with increasing cut-through traffic and speed on Christian Ave. The data indicated average speeds of 25-27 mph and 85th percentile speeds of 32 mph; 25 mph is posted. These speeds are consistent to those recorded in 2011, and confirm that speeds did not increase during 2011-2017. Anecdotally, this data suggests that current speeds on Christian Avenue would be materially similar to those recorded in 2011 and 2017.

Discussion

In response to HHH's 2021 petition, the Concord Police Department researched accident data for Christian Avenue for the period of 2016-2021. During the last 5 years, a total of four accidents involving HHH driveways occurred. When compared to prior data (2011-2014), the accident rate has decreased since the setbacks were modified in 2014.

Interestingly, the 2016-2021 data also revealed that three of the four accidents involved vehicles traveling eastbound on Christian Ave, where sight lines are greater in that direction. In addition, all four accidents were at HHH's main driveway, #33 Christian Ave, which has a very large sight line looking west (at eastbound traffic) of approximately 312 feet due to the transit stop and hydrant in close proximity to the driveway. This data, which is consistent with 2014 accident data, suggests that further increasing setbacks at HHH's driveways would not reduce accidents at these locations.

City staff have made attempts to solicit input on parking along Christian Ave from the management of the Concord Royal Gardens. However, no responses to these invitations were received.

In response to HHH's petition, TOC identified and reviewed three potential parking options for Christian Avenue:

1. Option 1: No parking change; Install pavement markings for on-Street parking spaces.

Under this approach, parking would remain on the north side of Christian Avenue and expanded setbacks, as implemented in 2014, would remain in place. TOC notes that the parking setbacks implemented in 2014 were increased from the City's standard 5' parking setback at driveways to 20-30', which are consistent with parking setbacks used at roadway intersections.

TOC also reviewed installation of pavement markings to supplement existing signage and to better articulate parking setbacks at driveways, fire hydrants, and CAT bus stops. There are currently no pavement markings on Christian Ave, and TOC believes installation of pavement markings will better define where parking is to occur and help deter illegal parking in the setbacks. In addition, parking layout plans developed by City Engineering indicate that some driveway setbacks will increase modestly once pavement markings are laid out in the field.

2. Option 2: Keep parking on north side of street and increase all setbacks to 30 feet.

TOC does not recommend this option as accident data reveals that the majority of accidents occurred at the driveway with the largest sight distance available. Therefore, increasing parking setbacks would not likely address the resident's concerns.

In addition, this option would result in the loss of 6+/- parking spaces, which may exacerbate illegal parking issues.

3. Option 3: Relocate on-street parking to the south side of Christian Avenue.

Lastly, TOC reviewed the option of relocating on-street parking to the south side of the street.

Due to less driveways and no hydrants on the south side of the road, Staff estimates that the amount of on-street parking would increase by approximately 7 spaces. In addition, residents of the Royal Gardens Apartments, who are allegedly the primary users of on-street parking on Christian Avenue, would have improved access to on-street parking.

However, there were several concerns raised about this option:

- Driveways into the Royal Gardens Complex may experience sight distance issues. Thus, this option simply shifts the concern to the south side of the street. It is unclear if this approach would be supported by residents and management of Royal Gardens. However, an important factor to recognize is

that two of the three driveways have alternative exits on Ormond Street or East Side Drive.

- The School District expressed safety concerns with this option, as children would need to cross between parked vehicles on the south side of the street to get to the school bus on the north side of the street. In addition, if on-street parking were shifted to the south side of the street, parking considerations would need to be implemented to accommodate small school buses which pick-up special needs students. As such, if parking were to be relocated to the south side of the street, TOC recommends that four 50' loading zones be established along the frontage of Royal Gardens apartment buildings which front on Christian Avenue to address this concern. The City does not have a loading zone ordinance; therefore, the City Council would need to enact a loading zone ordinance for these areas to be created and enforced.

This option would require modification to the existing Christian Avenue parking ordinance and General Services would need to stripe the roadway and shift/add signage to the south side.

A table comparing these options is below.

Option	No. of Parking Spaces	No. of Driveways	No. of Loading Zones	No. of Fire Hydrants
1. No change, install pavement markings on North Side	50	9 (+1 Exit Only)	0	3
2. Increase North Side Setbacks to 30'	44	9 (+1 Exit Only)	0	3
3. Relocate Parking to South Side	57	3	4	0

Summary

Recognizing data for Christian Avenue indicates 1) there have been minimal accidents, 2) that vehicles travel at reasonable speeds, and 3) existing on-street parking setbacks at HHH's driveways are consistent with the City's ordinance for roadway intersections, TOC voted at its December 21, 2021 meeting to recommend the following:

- Proceed with Option 1 in this report.

Option 1 will maintain on-street parking on the north side of the road. Due to mathematical considerations when laying out pavement markings for these parking spaces, Staff anticipates that some parking setbacks will actually increase beyond the 20' and 30' setbacks in existence today at some driveways. Please see the attached layout plan for more information.

KMH/kmh/dc

w/att: Timeline of Requests
Option 1 Plan

cc: Thomas J. Aspell, Jr., City Manager
Carlos P. Baía, Deputy City Manager for Development
Traffic Operations Committee
David Florence, Parking Supervisor
Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services & Special Projects