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New Hampshire's Main Street™

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REPORT TO MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Matthew R. Walsh, Interim Deputy City Manager - Development

DATE: September 28, 2022

SUBJECT: Spruce Street

Recommendation:

Accept this 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, Spruce Street, for public hearing on November 14, 2022.

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)

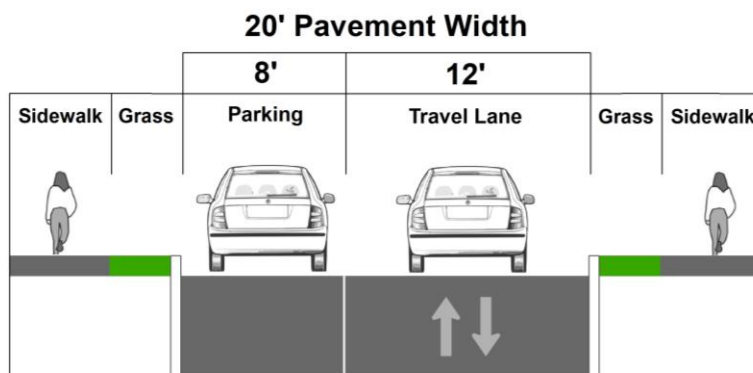


Figure 2: 28' Minimum Pavement Width
 (Low Traffic Volume Streets; Room to Pass 2 Vehicles is Not Critical; Parking Both Sides)

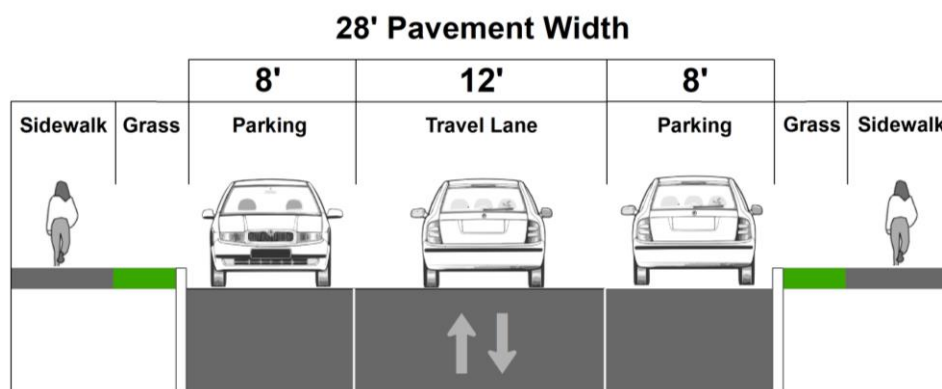
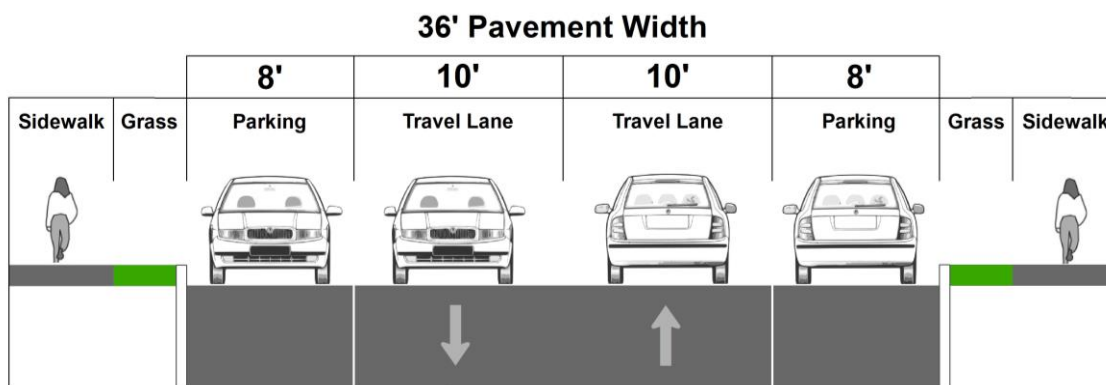


Figure 3: 36' Minimum Pavement Width
 (Low Traffic Volume Streets; Room to Pass 2 Vehicles Required; Parking Both Sides Only)



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.

In order to make review process manageable, the Parking Committee subdivided the study area into 4 separate zones, as follows.

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	Beacon St.	Centre St.	North Main St.	Liberty St.
4	Old North Cemetery Neighborhood	Curtice Ave.	Beacon St.	Prospect St.	Liberty St.

Review of Zones 2, 3, and 4 were completed 2018 and 2019. Zone 1, which was delayed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, was completed in late 2022.

Discussion:

On December 13, 2022 the City Council approved Ordinance #3109, which implemented certain parking changes for several streets within the Zone 1 neighborhood.

Parking changes included restricting parking on Spruce Street (Allison to Downing) to the east side of the street. Said changes were discussed with the community during two neighborhood forums, which were held on August 30, 2021 and October 25, 2021, respectively.

Signage to implement this change was installed in April 2022.

Due to a clerical error, property owners located on that portion of Spruce Street located between Allison and West Street were not notified of the aforementioned neighborhood forums. As a result, implementation of these changes surprised residents.

This section of Spruce Street is approximately 22’ wide. Parking was restricted to the east side of the road to facilitate snow removal and other municipal service. The east side was selected as it has greater parking capacity due to the layout of driveways and fire hydrants.

During its May 2022 meeting, the City Council referred a communication from Katie Katsikas and Christopher Carr regarding said parking changes to the Parking Committee for review.

On September 26, 2022, the Parking Committee held a neighborhood meeting to discuss residents’ concerns. Seven residents testified about the parking changes.

Upon review, the Parking Committee voted unanimously to recommend repeal of parking regulations enacted by Ordinance #3109 on Spruce Street between Allison and West Streets. Should the City Council approve the attached Ordinance, parking shall become permitted on both sides of the road.