



Legislation Text

File #: MC16-034, **Version:** 1

Agenda Information Sheet

DEPARTMENT: Transportation

CM/ ACM: John Cabrales, Jr.

Date: September 12, 2016

SUBJECT

Receive a report, hold a discussion, and provide direction regarding on-street parking enforcement and initiatives.

BACKGROUND

Earlier this year staff received a citizen-initiated petition to restrict parking on Highland Street from the intersection of Highland and Bernard Street to the intersection of Highland and IOOF Street. The petition followed the current process of receiving approval signatures from 60-percent of affected property owners on both sides of the subject street segment, and review/concurrence by the Traffic Engineer and Fire Marshal's office prior to advancing a staff recommendation to restrict one side of the street to the Traffic Safety Commission (TSC). In this case, the TSC considered the staff recommendation to restrict parking on the south side of the identified street segment and subsequently forwarded a favorable recommendation to City Council for formal action. As part of Council consideration and eventual approval of an ordinance establishing a parking restriction on this segment of Highland Street, Mayor Watts requested that staff review the current process used to establish no parking zones and consider developing a comprehensive plan for establishing no parking zones throughout the City.

In mid-May, Staff met with Mobility Committee Chair Roden to discuss the Council directive as there were multiple requests or initiatives under consideration to establish no park restrictions on various street segments within the community at that time. These proposed no park restrictions were both citizen-initiated through the petition process and staff-initiated due to public safety access or traffic safety concerns. Additionally, City of Denton staff and University of North Texas (UNT) staff were beginning to discuss a proposed modification to the existing interlocal agreement that allows localized jurisdiction and parking enforcement by UNT Police on roadways on and adjacent to the UNT campus.

The primary outcomes of the May 2016 meeting included the need to address the immediate public/traffic safety concerns while concurrently developing a comprehensive approach to on-street parking as requested by the Mayor and, acknowledging the potential for unintended impacts that could occur with the implementation of a "one size fits all approach" to establishing no parking zones across the city.

One of the challenges of creating a comprehensive, city-wide plan for the establishment of no parking zones is the size and width of existing street roadways. Specifically, there is a significant number of streets within the community that measure 26 feet wide or less, curb to curb. The importance of this measurement is based in the

Fire Code. The Fire Code states roadways that measure less than 26 feet wide may not support on-street parking on either side of the street, while roadways that are 26 feet to 32 feet wide may be able to support on-street parking on one side of the street. In essence, a conflict exists with the Fire Code and certain neighborhoods developed with a narrow residential roadway standard. A map demonstrating these streets has been attached as Exhibit 1.

It was agreed the best approach to establishing a comprehensive plan to implement on-street parking standards may be to address specific neighborhoods or areas that experience unique pressures based on proximity to activity centers such as the universities, retail, entertainment and employment districts. The initial focus areas included UNT and TWU neighborhoods that experience higher traffic or on-street parking demands between 8 am and 5 pm related to student parking, and the DTIP area that generally experiences on-street parking congestion after 5 pm on most weekdays and most of the day on weekends.

In the interim, staff recommends maintaining the current process with implementing no park restrictions on certain streets experiencing congestion from on-street parking negatively impacting public safety access. Staff also recommends clarifying the Municipal Code that authorizes the Traffic Engineer to address traffic safety issues caused by on-street parking.

Traffic Safety: The primary concern under this option is sight distance or line of sight issues due to vehicles that are parked close to the intersection or a driveway. Under the current City of Denton Municipal Code, parking restrictions can be enforced along a public street under certain conditions. The section from the code is attached as Exhibit 2 (Sec. 18-91.50).

Per current City Code, parking of vehicles is restricted in front of driveways or within five (5) feet of a driveway. Additionally, at intersections parking is restricted within 20 feet of a crosswalk at an intersection. It should be noted that the crosswalk is not defined and can be a 'marked' or 'unmarked' crosswalk. Per Texas Transportation Code 541.302 (2) (Exhibit 3), Crosswalks are defined as:

- (A) the portion of a roadway, including an intersection, designated as a pedestrian crossing by surface markings, including lines; or
- (B) the portion of a roadway at an intersection that is within the connections of the lateral lines of the sidewalks on opposite sides of the highway measured from the curbs or, in the absence of curbs, from the edges of the traversable roadway.

Based on the current City Code, parking restrictions can be enforced near driveways and intersections without installation of additional signs and markings. Having said that, the current code does not include the definition of "Crosswalk" and does not address some specific roadway conditions that exist, such as the absence of a sidewalk or curb. As such, it is recommended that the City update the current code to add the following description under Section 18-91.50. (b) (*Italicized text*).

- (b) An operator may not, except momentarily to pick up or discharge a passenger, stop or park an occupied or unoccupied vehicle:
 - (1) In front of a public or private driveway or within five (5) feet of a driveway;
 - (2) Within fifteen (15) feet of a fire hydrant;
 - (3) Within twenty (20) feet of a crosswalk at an intersection, where crosswalk means;
 - (A) the portion of a roadway, including an intersection, designated as a pedestrian

crossing by surface markings, including lines; or

- (B) the portion of a roadway at an intersection that is within the connections of the lateral lines of the sidewalks on opposite sides of the highway measured from the curbs or, in the absence of curbs, from the edges of the traversable roadway.
- (4) Within twenty (20) feet of the adjacent extension of the right-of-way line of the cross-street;
- (5) Within thirty (30) feet on the approach to a flashing signal, stop sign, yield sign, or traffic-control signal located at the side of a roadway;
- (6) Within twenty (20) feet of the driveway entrance to a fire station and on the side of a street opposite the entrance to a fire station within seventy-five (75) feet of the entrance, if the entrance is properly marked with a sign; or
- (7) Where an official sign prohibits stopping or parking.

The existing concerns at the intersections regarding line of sight and sight distance can be addressed with the enforcement of parking restrictions per existing code and through the adoption and subsequent enforcement of the proposed changes to the code. Addressing the parking restriction issue at intersections and driveways through the enforcement of the code will result in a uniform approach throughout the City, thus avoiding a biased, location-specific and/or complaint-based approach.

Public Safety: The primary concern under this option is the parking restriction along narrow street segments within the City as referenced earlier. Implementation of parking restrictions on both side of the roadway along street segments which are less than 26 feet (curb face to curb face) and on one side of the roadway along street segments that are 26 feet to 32 feet wide (curb face to curb face). Per Fire Code, the minimum width of a fire lane is 20 feet with six (6) of feet space for on-street parking. As this is a public safety concern related to access during emergency situations, the request for parking restrictions should continue to be facilitated through and/or with the assistance of the Fire Marshal and the Police Department on a case by case basis.

UNT: As part of an existing interlocal agreement, Ordinance 2006-358 attached as Exhibit 5, the City of Denton has granted UNT “jurisdiction and control of parking lanes within identified portions” of the community, generally those streets that are adjacent to UNT property. This agreement was developed to improve the enforcement of on-street parking on and near the UNT campus. While City of Denton Police Department maintains the authority to enforce on-street parking, compliance with enforcement through the UNT Police Department has been improved on street segments identified in Ordinance 2006-358. Compliance has benefited based on UNT’s ability to withhold registration for continuing students and withhold transcripts for graduates or students wishing to transfer who have unpaid parking citations. As part of the UNT Parking and Transportation Master Plan efforts, UNT has requested additional jurisdiction on several street segments not currently included in the ordinance. While the current ordinance has benefited both the City and the University, staff is examining components of the agreement to include current cost share formula for parking revenue; 66-percent UNT and 33-percent City, maintenance obligations, implementation of smart meters and potential impact to public right of way. It is important to reference the status of this interlocal agreement as part of the on-street parking discussion as any proposed revisions to the existing ordinance may have a substantial impact to adjacent neighborhoods and any “small area parking plan” that may be developed for area of the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Clarify municipal code related to authority granted to the Traffic Engineer to safeguard traffic safety.

2. Advance current Fire Department requests to improve public safety access on McCormick, Margie, Ave B and Fannin Streets. Generally in the neighborhood south of UNT and north of Fire Station 3.
3. Develop “small area parking plans” for UNT area neighborhoods and the DTIP area. (UNT plan may serve as a model for similar plan for TWU).
4. UNT and City staff continue negotiations related to proposed amendments to the UNT on-street parking agreement.

PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (Council, Boards, Commissions)

On May 3, 2016, the City Council approved Ordinance No. 2016-142, restricting parking on the south side of Highland Street from Bernard Street to IOOF Street. In concluding remarks the Mayor requested a comprehensive plan be developed to address on street parking in the City of Denton.

FISCAL INFORMATION

Undetermined at this point.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELATIONSHIP

The City of Denton’s Strategic Plan is an action-oriented road map that will help the City achieve its vision. The foundation for the plan is the five long-term Key Focus Areas (KFA): Organizational Excellence; Public Infrastructure; Economic Development; Safe, Livable, and Family-Friendly Community; and Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship. While individual items may support multiple KFAs, this specific City Council agenda item contributes most directly to the following KFA and goal:

Related Key Focus Area: Safe, Liveable & Family-Friendly Community
Related Goal: 4.1 Enhance public safety in the community

EXHIBITS

1. City of Denton Street Map - Streets 26 feet or less
2. Ordinance 2011-113 - Municipal Code Parking
3. Excerpt - Texas Transportation Code 541.302 (2)
4. Proposed revisions to Ordinance 2011-113
5. Ordinance 2006-358 - UNT Parking Enforcement
6. UNT Area Map - Current and Requested UNT Enforcement Authority

Respectfully submitted:
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Transportation Director