



## Legislation Text

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### Agenda Information Sheet

**DEPARTMENT:** Engineering

**CM/ ACM:** Jon Fortune, ACM

**Date:** April 11, 2017

#### **SUBJECT**

Receive a report, hold discussion and give staff direction regarding prohibiting parking along Denton Street from Oak Street to Hickory Street and Texas Street from Vine Street to Frame Street.

#### **BACKGROUND**

City of Denton has been experiencing substantial growth similar to other cities in the North Texas region. This growth has burdened the existing public infrastructure which has resulted in inadequate or insufficient parking and traffic congestion, particularly in the older areas of the City. On-street parking demand in certain areas of the City, especially close to the two universities (UNT and TWU) and in the downtown area is very high.

Within the older areas of the City, the transportation network comprises of streets that were designed and constructed decades ago. Many street segments are narrow and cannot accommodate on-street parking while maintaining clear minimum access for emergency vehicles. The subject street segments are narrow streets that cannot accommodate on-street parking and maintain emergency vehicle access. On one hand, restricting parking along street segments in the sensitive areas is highly undesirable while on the other hand, public safety is an important aspect and providing access for emergency vehicles is an essential function served by City streets.

Staff is currently in the process of evaluating whether a comprehensive approach is required and the feasibility of implementing it throughout the City. In the meantime staff will continue to review safety and emergency access concerns from residents that may require implementation of parking restriction along specific street segments.

#### **Texas Street**

On April 20, 2016, the Lonestar Apartments located at 600 Texas St. experienced a fire caused by a lightning strike. Several units were destroyed and all residents were displaced due to the damage. Continued weather events delayed repairs causing further damage to the structure. This resulted in a rebuild of the structure at a level of construction that required the building to meet current code standards.

The apartment complex was constructed in 2002 and consists of three apartment buildings with a total of 34 living units used exclusively by Texas Women's University for student housing. The construction of the apartment building is 34 feet in height. Current fire code requires an aerial fire apparatus access road be provided where the vertical distance between the grade and the highest roof surface exceeds 30 feet. The aerial

fire apparatus access road must have a minimum unobstructed width of 26 feet.

The complex has an existing fire lane on the south side of the complex that runs the length of its parking lot. The width of the fire lane is 24 feet and the length is 245 feet. The width of the existing lane does not meet the requirements for an aerial access road and exceeds the maximum length requirement of 150 feet. The fire lane dead ends into private property on the east side. The current site layout prevents the developer from making improvements on the property. Widening the existing fire lane at the east entrance off Vine St. is restricted due to utilities. The extended dead end of the fire lane does not support widening at the west end due to lack of a turn around.

The code allows for the use of a public street as a fire lane if the street remains unobstructed. Texas Street, between Vine Street and Frame Street, runs the length of the apartment complex on the north side. Measuring at a 30 foot width, Texas Street meets the width requirement of 26 feet to serve as the development's aerial access road. To achieve the un-obstruction requirement, parking must be prohibited on both sides of the street from Vine Street to Frame Street.

Considering and reviewing all potential options, restricted parking on Texas Street is the single viable option to meet fire code access requirements and advance the development project

### **Denton Street**

In the recent past, City staff has received several requests from concerned residents regarding the segment of Denton Street between Oak Street and Hickory Street. The primary issue was the narrow street width and the heavy use of on-street parking (both side) along this section of the roadway.

The segment of Denton Street between Oak Street and Hickory Street is approximately 24 feet in width and experiences heavy on-street parking on both sides due to the proximity of the University of North Texas (UNT) campus and multi-family residential units on both sites of the street. Given the location and surrounding land use, on-street parking demand in this area is high. As such, staff investigated the possibility of reducing the impact on parking supply by restricting parking on west side only while allowing on-street parking on the east side.

The Fire Code requires a street to be a minimum of 26 feet for allowing on-street parking on one side. This requirement provides the necessary space essential for access and deployment of fire equipment. The current street width does not provide sufficient capacity to legally permit on-street parking on both sides of Denton Street between Oak Street and Hickory Street as it does not satisfy the requirement included in the fire code.

Staff has notified the property owners and residents on and adjacent to Denton Street about the proposed discussion item regarding parking on Denton Street to ensure residents and property owners have an opportunity to voice any concerns they may have. Letters were mailed on February 24th and door hangers were placed on March 2nd on residential addresses on both sides of Denton Street.

Based on review of existing parking conditions and the available street width for two-way traffic along Denton Street between Oak Street and Hickory Street and further review of the Fire Department access and response needs, staff recommends restricting parking on both sides of the street. This will allow emergency vehicles to respond to public safety calls and allow for the safe deployment of Fire Department equipment. While considering this recommendation, it should be noted that typically restricting on street parking reduces the side friction resulting in the possibility of increase in average speeds along this segment of Denton Street.

Staff is aware there are other street segments throughout the community that experience heavy on-street parking and may be in conflict of the Fire Code minimum street width of 26 feet. Staff is in the process of identifying these street segments and reviewing options with the intent of developing a comprehensive plan to balance public safety requirements and on-street parking needs.

### **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.      Site Map - Texas Street
2.      Site Map - Denton Street
3.      City Map - Street Widths

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