



Connector Roads Policy Work Session

BACKGROUND:

During the review of three development proposals in the spring of 2023, (South Green, Jade Creek and 904 Homestead Road), questions were raised about the Connector Roads Policy and the benefits of requiring a full vehicular connection between new development and existing neighborhoods. See the attached supporting materials for background and history:

- B. Connector Roads Policy
- C. Street Connectivity Chronology
- D. Relevant Town, State, and Nearby Municipalities' Policies & Regulations
- E. Memo from Fire Chief Will Potter

WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF STREETS; WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS FOR STREETS?

Streets serve as a principle framework for movement and activity in a place providing for circulation, connection and access on routine basis and in emergencies. Streets physically define areas of Town and connect people with places. Carrboro has long embraced transportation choices and has worked to create spaces that can serve many types of travelers.

Recent Land Use Ordinance (LUO) updates included the addition of a Complete Streets Policy in Section 15-209:

(1) Complete Streets are designed and operated to provide safe and accessible travel for all modes, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, commercial vehicles, emergency vehicles and for people of all ages and all abilities.

(b) Based upon the findings set forth in subsection (a), the Council declares that it is not only desirable but essential to implement a Complete Streets policy to construct equitable streets and networks that prioritize safety, comfort and connectivity to destinations for all people who use the street network and to encourage healthy, active living, reduce traffic congestion and fossil fuel use, and improve the safety and quality of life of residents of Carrboro.

[Article XIV of Carrboro's LUO](#), outlines the Town's standards for streets and sidewalks. It provides street classifications and then design specifications for each street type including minimum right-of-way width, minimum pavement width, provisions for curb and gutter or vegetated ditch/shoulders, and locations and types of bike lanes sidewalks.

Detailed specifications for street design and construction are included [Appendix C](#). The bulk of the dimensional and construction standards were established as a result of residential street design workshops in 1999, with exceptions and amendments that have followed. The Town Code further defines play streets, on which "...no person may drive a vehicle upon such street or part thereof unless they reside there, or have business there..." (Town Code, Sec. 6-12). No street, or portion of a street, in Town has been designated as a "play street."



HOW POLICIES AND STANDARDS ADDRESS STREET CONNECTIVITY?

Land Use Ordinance (LUO) [15-214; 15-217; 15-221]

- All streets shall be interconnected (unless topography of land affects practicality).
- Connections facilitate access to neighborhoods and shall be created in a way that do not encourage use by substantial through traffic.
- Provides standards for the creation of a temporary stub to be future development

NC State Building Code: Fire Code [503; D107]

- Developments exceeding 30 dwelling units are required to have two separate access roads
- Smaller developments can be required to have two or more exits by the fire code official.
- Fire apparatus access roads shall not be obstructed in any manner.

Connector Roads Policy [last updated 2005]

- Ensure that old and new developments and businesses in the town are connected.
- 1996 policy review clarified to include all new roads (minor, local, subcollector, and collector)
- The policy is administered through the LUO

See Attachment C for detailed language in the LUO, the Connector Roads Policy, the Fire Code, and nearby municipalities' regulations.

Town regulations do not explicitly address the use of bollards, while the Fire Code classifies them as obstructions. The policies are clear in purpose and intent, however the current inconsistency around the installation of permanent but movable bollards needs clarification.

Street interconnectivity serves to support the Town's climate and transportation goals, emergency response and service delivery, and economic development and growth.

- Decreases travel times and vehicle-miles-traveled (VMTs), and subsequent emissions by providing continuous and direct routes.
- Continuity expands to cyclists and pedestrians, supporting multimodal transportation.
- Multiple readily available means of ingress and egress maintain community safety.
 - Fallen trees, gas leaks, and other environmental and infrastructural hazards can block road access/evacuation routes (See Attachment D)
- Connects old and new commercial, residential, and mixed use developments
- Provides a sense of connectivity and unity as the Town grows



HOW IS STREET CONNECTIVITY IMPLEMENTED?

- Projects are designed to connect to existing street network.
- During construction, barricades may be installed to prevent traffic from passing through hazardous area.
- Upon completion of construction of the development, safety barricades are removed.
- Stub outs for potential future connections feature signage at the dead end of the street indicating “Road may continue in the future.”



Disclosure sign at the end of Lucas Lane

SHOULD THERE BE EXCEPTIONS TO CONNECTING STREETS?

The majority of collector, subcollector, local, and minor residential streets follow the Connector Roads Policy, the LUO, and the State Fire Code. While there are cul-de-sacs and dead-end roads in Carrboro, many of these comply with, or predate amendments to, the Connector Roads Policy and the LUO.

See Attachment B for a chronology of council discussions and resolutions that include decisions on street interconnectivity. A table with relevant or previously discussed connections is provided below.

Relevant Council Decisions with Street Connections		
Road/Neighborhood	Year	Details
Cobblestone & Colfax	1992	Connector Road Policy doesn’t include subcollector roads
Autumn Drive/Barington Hills	2003	bollards installed until sidewalk improvements completed
Winmore	2003	3 street connections and two stubs for potential future access
Claremont & Colfax	2009	1 connection, 1 stub, and 1 dead end street
Purple Leaf Pl/South Green	2015	Bollards on Purple Leaf Place sustained for pedestrian, cyclist, and emergency access only
Tripp Farm Rd/Dr. MLK Jr Park	2017	LUO amended for flexible administration on Town-owned properties
Wyndham Dr/Kentfield	2018	1 connection and 1 connection with bollards
Jade Creek	2022	2 connections
Homestead/Lucas Lane	2023	2 connections – Town Council requests work session

Town staff have identified four examples of a street connection with bollards:

- Purple Leaf Place
- Wyndham Drive
- Autumn Drive
- Colfax Drive

During the design and construction of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park, an amendment to the LUO was required to not connect Pathway and Hillsborough via Tripp Farm Rd stating, “On Town-owned properties,

the Town Council may eliminate or reduce the requirements of this section for reservation and/or connection of right-of-way.” (Section 15-221).

Current policy only offers exceptions to connectivity when topography would make this impracticable. The LUO does not specify whether the installation of permanent bollards is considered an exception.

When a decision is made to deviate from the street connectivity policies, the street becomes a nonconforming instance in relation to the Fire Code.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Further clarity on the timeline and mechanisms for the removal of bollards, barriers, or other obstructions is needed.
- Bollard removal upon the issuance of the first Certificate of Occupancy; preparation of a text amendment to the Land Use Ordinance to accomplish this.

