



TOWN OF CARRBORO
NORTH CAROLINA

TRANSMITTAL

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

DELIVERED VIA: *HAND* *MAIL* *FAX* *EMAIL*

To: David Andrews, Town Manager
Mayor and Town Council

From: Zachary Hallock, Transportation Planner

Date: October 9, 2020

Subject: Update on Laurel Avenue Parking

Planning Staff first received communication from the residents along Laurel Avenue in the Summer of 2018 asking if something can be done to prevent spill over parking from the Saturday Morning Farmer's Market from parking on the street south of Jones Ferry Road and limit on-street parking to residents. The Staff Traffic and Parking Committee was held within a month following the communication and included staff from Planning, Police, Fire, Public Works, and Economic Development. Currently, there are no parking restrictions on Laurel Avenue south of Jones Ferry. The Town does not currently have a mechanism for restricting parking to residents only (which would require additional administration and enforcement). Furthermore, parking cannot be defined along the street (i.e. no parking from 8a-12p Saturday but allowed other times), as the requirements of the Fire Code specify minimum clearance widths. The pavement on Laurel Avenue is 21 feet wide, too narrow for the town to codify that parking is allowed while also meeting the Fire Code. Staff determined that the best course of action was to coordinate with the Farmer's Market to have their staff place 'No Parking' yard signs along the section of Laurel Ave closest to Jones Ferry Road.

In May of 2019, staff received a second inquiry regarding the status parking restrictions along Laurel Avenue, and indicating that the problem had begun occurring again. Staff observations during the week of 6/22/19 indicated that during a typical weekday morning (Thursday, hourly observations from 9 AM to 12 PM) there was on average 5 vehicles parked along the length of Laurel Avenue (south of Jones Ferry Road) and 0 parked within the 200' closest to Jones Ferry Road. On Saturday morning (during the Farmer's Market) there was observed an average of 9 vehicles parked along the length of Laurel Avenue and with an average of 4.5 of those vehicles parked within the 200' closest to Jones Ferry Road. The "No Parking" signs had not been in place during this observation.

At the end of August 2019, Planning staff coordinated an input session with some residents from Laurel Avenue and discussed the process to change parking on the street, the process for resident participation, and the details of how a residential parking permit program could work. The Town does not currently have a residential parking permit program, additional information can be provided to Town Council, if desired, at a later date. However, due to the requirements of the Fire Code, staff do not recommend changing parking regulations on Laurel Avenue. The only change that could be made and still conform with Fire Code would be to completely prohibit on-street parking from occurring, which is contrary to what the residents on the street desire.

In September 2019, Planning and Recreation & Parks department staff met to discuss how to handle unexpected on-street parking during major events such as the Carrboro Music Festival, as the increased demand for parking can result in spill over onto local streets that are unregulated. Staff determined that the best course of action was to create special temporary “No Parking” signs to be placed on existing signs where possible (as opposed to the smaller, yard signs), and coordinated with public works for major events.

As of September, staff from the Recreation & Parks department have been coordinating to ensuring “No Parking” signs are placed on Laurel Avenue by the Farmer’s Market while the Market is open. They will continue to do in the future. Despite social distancing requirements put in place to minimize the spread of COVID-19, they still see sufficient demand for parking, such that removing the signs would likely result in a return of Farmer’s Market patrons parking on Laurel Avenue. The most recent Saturday morning observation by Recreation & Parks staff found no vehicles parked along Laurel Avenue near where the signs were placed. Staff will continue to monitor the situation and respond to requests from residents. Staff can bring back additional information about a residential parking permit program, if desired by Council, at a later date.