

DATE: November 8, 2017

TO: Honorable Mayor Jerry Smith
City Council

FROM: Anne Marie Gaura, City Manager
Gene Lowery, Chief of Police

SUBJECT: Safe Streets Initiative

I. Summary

As a tried and true mechanism to address public safety concerns, it is recommended to consider the creation of an overnight street safety program incorporating parking provisions that help ensure streets are clear, have enhanced visibility, and first responders have improved access. Based on current public safety challenges that the City has experienced, it is recommended to consider the creation of areas within which parking by non-residents is prohibited between the hours of 2:00am and 6:00am.

II. Background

The City currently has a multitude of parking regulations in various areas of the City. Following the occurrence of several incidents of significant crime and the occurrence of street takeovers in the northwestern part of the City, the City has adopted additional parking regulations in that area over the past few years. Those parking measures have had significant impact on reducing certain types of criminal behavior, and in maintaining ingress and egress from neighborhoods by first responders.

In the past several weeks, the City has experienced additional episodes of concern and is evaluating effective techniques for mitigating those concerns. Many communities have utilized overnight parking prohibitions as an effective way of prohibiting non-residents from parking cars or remaining within areas of their community in late hours or overnight. After diligent consideration of all possible options, it is recommended to adopt overnight parking regulations.

There are three basic areas contemplated on the attached map. First, Russell Road and Crane Drive are proposed to have no parking between the hours of 10:00pm and 6:00am. These streets abut Welsh Park, which closes at 10:00pm. The presence of cars on the street in this area has promoted unlawful gatherings and crime, including shootings, within the park and the immediate areas surrounding it.

Second, in the areas marked in red cross-hatch on the map, it is proposed to have no overnight parking between the hours of 2:00am and 6:00am. This timeline respects the need for social interaction, studying and visiting, but also ensures that the streets are clear during peak hours for public safety concerns, and works to minimize unauthorized visitors at high-density residential properties.

Third, the City's experience has been that when parking regulations are enacted in the Greek Row area, it can have the effect of displacing parked vehicles into adjacent residential neighborhoods. The yellow cross-hatch area is proposed to have no overnight parking between the hours of 2:00am and 6:00am, except for residents with a properly issued parking pass from the City. Yellow cross-hatch area also includes the north fifth ward and College-John neighborhood, for two reasons. First, the City has experienced significant public safety concerns, including a shooting last fall, in the College-John neighborhood. Second, the Safe Streets Initiative is designed to be proactive, to prevent other neighborhoods from becoming targets of unlawful activity. As the parking regulations would permit resident parking, it should not adversely affect residents of the area, but should help ensure a safer environment.

These regulations would be in addition to existing parking regulations, so areas that are presently marked as no-parking or restricted parking would remain so-regulated. The areas would be marked as a tow-zone, to ensure that they are fully adhered to. It is recommended to utilize the same fine structure as snow-route parking citations, which would be \$75 at time of issuance, and increase to \$100 if not paid within 10 days.

The Safe Streets Initiative is based on tried and true policing techniques; the City has experienced success with previous, more limited parking regulations within the Greek Row areas, and many communities use parking regulations of this nature to help promote and preserve a safe environment.

Much of the housing in this area is rental housing, which by City Code should have adequate on-site parking. However, it has been the City's experience that some developments lack adequate parking, and hence it is proposed to provide a process for residents to obtain parking permits to authorize them to park in close proximity to their residence. Resident parking permits would be non-transferrable and restricted to a single, specified vehicle. A resident parking permit would not provide relief from other applicable parking restrictions, and vehicles parked without a permit would be subject to immediate tow.

A draft ordinance will be prepared that will provide a mechanism for issuance of permits through the Finance and Police Departments, and provides minimum standards for issuance. It will also provide a process for suspension or revocation of a resident parking permit where the vehicle is repeatedly parked illegally or is used in the commission of certain serious crimes.

Based on the impact that this ordinance could have upon the area at issue, the City is engaging in significant public outreach to solicit feedback and suggestions that can be



incorporated into an actionable item to return to City Council. As this effort has been triggered by ongoing public safety concerns, the City seeks to take immediate action to start the discussion process, so that an action item can return as soon as the November 27, 2017 City Council meeting. This item has been brought forward to the Committee of the Whole to initiate public discussions and ensure ample opportunity for feedback from the community and from students of Northern Illinois University.

Serious consideration of this matter is recommended, as it is one critical part of a multi-faceted approach to addressing ongoing public safety concerns within the City and to help create the conditions that lead to Safe Streets and a safe community.

III. Community Groups/Interested Parties Contacted

This item is anticipated to be discussed at the Committee of the Whole meeting of November 13, 2017 to permit public discussion and consideration. The Police Department has also contacted Northern Illinois University and is in the process of facilitating community stakeholder discussions which are anticipated to occur in advance of the November 27 City Council meeting.

IV. Legal Impact

The City has the legal ability to impose parking restrictions such as those contemplated herein.

V. Financial Impact

This Ordinance is anticipated to be revenue neutral, with permit cost covering the costs of issuance.

VI. Options

This item is presented for discussion only.

VII. Recommendation

It is recommended to undertake discussion of this matter and consider it for action as soon as the November 27, 2017 City Council meeting, pending community input.



Proposed Parking Restrictions, Zone 1

