



Town Services and Outreach Committee Review Criteria for Evaluating Residential Parking Requests

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9-30-2021

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11-18-2021

1. Introduction

Parking and road usage decisions in Amherst have historically been made on a street by street basis without application of consistent criteria. While there are national, state, and local guidelines, policies, or goals for parking and roadway use in existence, they are not generally referenced in the decision process.

The goal of this document is to provide a more consistent set of criteria to guide the Town Services and Outreach Committee (TSO) when it must make recommendations regarding parking and roadway usage proposals to the Town Council.

Per the Amherst Home Rule Charter Sec. 2.14 and as described in the adopted [Town Council Policy on the Control and Regulation of the Public Ways](#), the Council as the Keeper of the Public Way is responsible for making decisions involving the Public Way in a large number of areas including the use of the Town Commons, requests for long term parking reservations, long term road or sidewalk closures, and other permanent changes to roads or sidewalks. While the criteria spelled out in this document may prove useful in those circumstances, the scope of this document is limited to decisions regarding parking regulations and restrictions on Town streets that are primarily residential and the criteria employed when approaching requests for changes to current regulations and restrictions.

2. The Three Main Criteria

The three main criteria that will be applied to any decision regarding parking and road usage are:

1. Roadway classification
2. Available pavement width
3. Traffic flow data

Further explanation for each criterion described below.

Roadway Classification

Road classification is a method to identify the expected uses and traffic types on a roadway. The Town uses the roadway classification system as part of the current pavement management system to estimate road loads and potential pavement deterioration. Amherst roadways are classified into the following groups.

1. **Arterial roadways:** These roadways are the primary connector roadways in Town between village centers and between other communities. These are the roadways that have transit

routes, are the major routes for emergency vehicles and truck traffic, and should be priority roadways for maintaining and adding bike and pedestrian accommodations. These roads have higher vehicle volumes and vehicle sizes and should be free-flowing for all users.

2. **Collector roadways:** These roadways function as the connections between Arterial and Residential roadways. They have less traffic than an Arterial, but more than a Residential roadway and usually have more restrictions on traffic flow.
3. **Residential roadways:** These are the roadways in the local neighborhoods. They do not see transit buses or heavy truck traffic and should see more neighborhood use for walking and biking than vehicle traffic. Traffic speeds should be lower than Arterial and Collector roadways.

There are currently 25 roadways classified as Arterial, 9 as Collectors, and 270 segments classified as Residential.

Available Pavement Width

Based on the roadway classifications above, the following are the recommended lane widths, total pavement widths, and parking area widths in feet¹.

Classification	Lane width (single lane)	2-way traffic	Parking
Arterial	10 – 12	20 – 24	7 – 8
Collector	10 – 11	20 – 24	7 – 8
Residential	8 – 10	16 – 20	7

Traffic Flow Data

Traffic flow determines whether parking should be allowed on a roadway that does not meet the pavement widths above. An Arterial or Collector roadway with a high traffic flow should meet the pavement widths above. Where parking is allowed, these roadways should have full accommodations for parking so that parking does not block bike lanes, shoulders, or sidewalks.

¹ Lane widths are recommended based on guidance from the Federal Highway Authority, American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials, National Association of City Transportation Officials, and Mass Department of Transportation. The minimum lane width of 8 feet for Residential roadways is based on Massachusetts law allowing the maximum width of a vehicle to be 8.5 feet without a special permit.

Parking on a Residential roadway that does not meet above pavement widths should consider traffic flow. The goal is to allow all users access to the roadway, including the passage of larger, wider, and longer vehicles such as school busses, refuse collection vehicles, delivery trucks, and emergency vehicles.

3. Application of Criteria and Additional Considerations

Basic Guidance

1. In general, parking decisions should be guided by the Road Classification and the Pavement Widths specified for that Classification.
2. Where a roadway does not meet the specified Pavement Widths for its Classification, traffic flow should be used to determine appropriate parking allowances, regulations, and restrictions.
3. Arterial Roadways and Collector Roadways with high traffic flow should meet the Pavement Width Guidelines.
4. Collector Roadways and Residential Roadways with moderate or low traffic flow shall employ the criteria listed below in order to determine appropriate parking. The goal is to allow all users access to the roadway.

Additional considerations for Collector and Residential Roadways

The following additional factors should be considered when responding to parking requests on Collector and Residential roadways:

- Closeness to downtown or village centers
- Accident history when available or requested by TSO
- Public safety (i.e. sufficient access for school buses, AFD trucks)
- Observed parking demand
- Resident input
- Availability of off-street parking
- Interface with Bike and Pedestrian Network Plan
- Adequate sightlines at driveways, cross-streets, crosswalks, and bus stops
- Presence or absence of sidewalks



- Reported proximity of populations with higher traffic safety issues (children, older adults, people with disabilities)
- Possible impacts on the Town's Parking Permit system
- Possible impacts to adjacent streets

These factors should be considered by TSO in evaluating any proposed residential parking request. It should be the totality of factors and not one single factor that should be decisive. Any recommendation to the Council should reference these factors in making its case.