



**Date: September 29, 2016**

**MEMORANDUM**

**To: Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager**  
**Through: Terry Bellamy, Director of Transportation**  
**From: Bryan Poole, Transportation Planner II, Bicycle and Pedestrian**  
**Subject: West Club Boulevard Restriping Project**

Altering West Club Boulevard to calm traffic has been a consideration for the past 15 years, originating with a Traffic Calming Study released in October 2001. Public engagement associated with this study identified community concerns regarding pedestrian safety, speeding, curb radii, and sight distance. The recommendations of the study were to add neckdowns, a median, and/or traffic circles along Club Boulevard between Georgia Ave. and Maryland Ave. The first of these improvements, neckdowns and a median at Oval Park, was implemented in 2007.

Because of a lack of funding for additional corridor improvement, the project was put on hold until 2010, when plans for design and construction were developed to add five additional neckdowns. When announced, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) and other bicycle advocates spoke out against the plan, arguing the changes would be a detriment to bicyclists and make the road more dangerous. The Watts Hospital-Hillandale Neighborhood Association (WHHNA), supportive of the original neckdown plan until 2011, began to also question whether improvements could be made to benefit all road users. In 2014, the WHHNA, BPAC, and Bike Durham developed [a joint letter](#) to City Council requesting a new design focusing on making the street safe for all users, lowering the speed limit, and continuing to meet the parking needs of the neighborhood.

As a result, the original plan was set aside and the Transportation Department began working with a group of stakeholders to develop a new concept. The Department also conducted follow-up studies to determine traffic volume, speed and parking along the street. Traffic volume and speed data were collected at 9 locations along the corridor in 2001, 2008, and 2015. These studies reveal that between 2001 and 2015 traffic volumes decreased 14%, motorists exceeding the posted speed limit of 35mph decreased 57%, and the average 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed fell from 41 to 36mph. Some of the largest reductions in speed were in the area near Oval Park, indicating that the neckdowns and median were successful in slowing speeds along the entire corridor. An accident analysis showed that serious accidents were reduced by 75% and minor accidents by 33%.

Concerning parking, there are currently 187 on-street parking spaces available on West Club Boulevard between Maryland and Hillandale. A parking study conducted in July 2015, at various times of the day and days of the week, counted 14 to 17 vehicles, a utilization rate of 7-9 percent. The highest utilization of parking was on the north side of the 2400 block of West Club Boulevard between Alabama and Georgia. Parking utilization there ranged from 3 to 6 vehicles.

The stakeholder group tasked with developing new designs included representatives from the neighborhood, WHHNA Board, BPAC, Bike Durham, and Transportation. In 2015, five different pavement-marking plan options were presented to the group, which chose Alternative 5 as the most agreeable for all representatives. This plan involves removing parking from one side of the street, adding bicycle lanes and crosswalks, and shifting the availability of parking from one side of the street to the other, with the shift occurring “mid-block”. In this plan the estimated number of parking spaces will be reduced from 187 to 81, a reduction of 57%.

The road is currently in need of being restriped, due to the deterioration of existing pavement markings. Also, Public Works Department does not plan to fully resurface the road until at least 2019, as they coordinate with Water Management’s waterline replacement project. As a result, then Director of Transportation Mark Ahrendsen proposed the Alternative 5 plan be presented to the public. If there was “general consensus” among the public the road could be restriped immediately, with additional adjustments being an option during the road’s eventual resurfacing. Working with the WHHNA Board, a public meeting was held August 17 to gather comments, and comments were additionally solicited via mail and email until August 24.

In total, 70 comments related to the plan were received during the public comment period. Staff determined 45 comments (64%) were in support of the plan, 17 (24%) were against the plan, and 8 (11%) were neutral/unclear. Of the total comments received, 16 were from residents who live on Club Boulevard: 8 households were in support (50%), 5 were against (31%), and 3 (19%) were neutral. Many comments in support mentioned the desire to bike along this section of Club Boulevard and need for adequate bicycle facilities. Concerns from those against the plan focused primarily on loss of parking and reduced sight distance, and questioned the needs of bicyclists taking precedent over those of residents. Mosaic Church is supportive of the plan, while the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics did not provide a comment. Transportation posted the comments and staff responses on the project website: <http://durhamnc.gov/2929/West-Club-Boulevard-Restriping-Project>

There have been numerous proposals, plans, and ideas for West Club Boulevard during the last 15 years. The plan presented for public comment is the result of extensive work by the WHHNA board president, Transportation Department staff, and various stakeholders. While the comments are not unanimously supportive, a majority of citizens and residents on Club are in support of the plan and/or had minor comments.

West Club Boulevard is identified in the 2006 Comprehensive Bicycle Plan as one of the “Top 20 On-Street Bicycle Projects” with a recommendation for bicycle lanes. The bicycle facility would eventually serve as a key connector to the Hillandale Road bicycle and pedestrian project, which is entering the design phase and is estimated to be constructed by 2020. Additionally, Broad Street between Guess Road and Main Street has been identified as a corridor in need of bicycle facilities.

The recommendation of this department is to proceed with the restriping plan as presented, with minor modifications. To address the concerns regarding loss of parking on the north side of the 2400 block, the lane shift will not begin until the 2300 block. This will increase the amount of parking by an estimated 3 spaces, which will be located on the north side of the street where parking utilization rates are higher. Additionally, the westbound bicycle lane will be dropped at Georgia, to allow parking to remain on both sides of the street between Georgia and Hillandale. This will add an additional 10 spaces, bringing the total number of on-street spaces to 91, which retains 49% of the current total. Finally, we plan to add green lane markings at intersections along the corridor to increase the visibility of bicyclists at these conflict points. Ultimately, this pavement marking plan is intended to calm traffic, further increase safety, and allow the street to better function as a neighborhood street.

We believe this solution best addresses the concerns indicated by residents living along West Club Boulevard, while adhering to the plan developed with key stakeholders and supported by the majority of Durham residents who provided comments. Alternatively, the existing center line could be restriped while adding crosswalks, thus improving pedestrian visibility while maintaining the current functionality of the corridor. Other alternatives, such as removing parking from the same side of the street for the whole corridor, providing a bike lane in one direction and shared-lane marking in the other, etc. would need to be designed, presented to the stakeholder group and again released for public comment. These options would delay the restriping until the 2017 pavement marking season.