



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Councilors

FROM: Rich Olson, City Manager
Eddie M. Buffalo, Jr., Chief of Police

DATE: March 20, 2015

RE: Consideration – Recommendation for Parking on one side of the street in Hugh Cale Area of City **(AMENDED)**

BACKGROUND:

Over the past several years, the Elizabeth City Police Department has noticed an increasing amount of traffic in the Hugh Cale area of the City, specifically the area encompassing the American Legion Hut, which spans South Martin Luther King Drive to Shepard Street; Shepard Street from South Road Street towards Herrington Road; and Cale Street to Shepard Street. Particularly when there is an influx of people gathered in the area of American Legion Hut - in the front and rear of the business - the surrounding area becomes overly congested and presents public safety concerns. The amount of traffic congestion could be detrimental to first responders being dispatched to emergencies and calls for service in this area.

Members of the Police Department met with the citizens of this area to discuss these parking issues and subsequent public safety concerns posed. Positive feedback was received from the citizens, who showed support of a modification to the existing traffic flow pattern in their community. To rectify the problem and ensure both the needs of the residents and visitors to this area are being met, staff recommends posting “no-parking” signs on the east side of South Martin Luther King Drive, from Shepard Street to South Road and also on the east side of Cale Street between Shepard Street and South Road Street. The streets are maintained by the City’s Public Works Department, and therefore staff recommends that the Public Works Department post signs that read “NO PARKING THIS SIDE OF THE STREET” in the areas identified as troublesome.

ANALYSIS:

The Elizabeth City Police Department has dealt with parking and traffic concerns in the Hugh Cale area of the city for a number of years. Members of the Department met

with residents of the Hugh Cale community on Monday, March 16, 2015. Previous to the scheduled meeting, a flyer was distributed to each household and/or business in the area to be effected by proposed "one side parking." At the meeting on the evening of March 16th, the response was overwhelmingly in support of modifying the parking to one side in this area. Attendees at the meeting thanked the Police Department for recognizing that there are potential problems that could result from the current traffic flow and welcomed the idea to make this area of the community restricted to one-side parking.

Emergency equipment cannot safely emerge through the streets due to the narrow passage-way that is present if parking remains on both sides. Police, fire, and emergency personnel who respond to calls for service in this area must have ample space to arrive and, specifically for the Fire Department, enough room to maneuver safety apparatus and life-saving equipment to potential victims.

The current traffic flow can easily become problematic if there are vehicles parked on both sides of the roadway, prohibiting the safe navigation of first responders. Staff inspected the current roadways in this vicinity in February 2015 and concluded road widths are as follows: South Martin Luther King Drive is 26 feet wide; Cale Street is 19 feet wide; and Shepard Street is 31 feet wide from curb to curb, respectively. If two standard sized vehicles (varying between 6 – 7 feet wide) are parked on either side of the street, there is no way that two other standard sized vehicles may safely navigate through in different directions on either South Martin Luther King Drive or Cale Street, and extremely difficult to navigate safely down Shepard Street. On both South Martin Luther King Drive and Cale Street, it is certain that one of the two passing vehicles would have to pull into an empty roadside space and allow the other vehicle to pass to accomplish safe navigation through the narrow roadways of this area.

After careful consideration regarding the width of Shepard Street (which is wider than the other two identified streets), citizens expressed the desire for double-sided parking to remain on Shepard Street and staff is therefore recommending that no action be taken regarding Shepard Street at the current time. Staff will continue to monitor parking on Shepard Street; if any future problems are identified, staff is prepared to re-visit a modification of the traffic flow patten on Shepard Street, specifically the area from South Road Street towards Herrington Road.

It is important to note that on more than one occasion, the Elizabeth City Police Department, in response to calls for service in the area of South Martin Luther King Drive, has had to back out; park, and physically walk down the street to get to the call and administer assistance. If an oversized emergency vehicle such as a fire engine or EMS unit attempted passage during congested hours, it would be virtually impossible and tragedy could occur. Letters of support have been received from both the Elizabeth City Fire Department and Pasquotank-Camden Emergency Medical Service (attached). The Elizabeth City Fire Department advises in its letter that "if vehicles park on both sides of the street at the same location we only have 10 feet of passing clearance on MLK and 3 feet on Cale Street. This not only could possibly hinder our response to emergencies in this area, it could also create a situation where we do not have enough room to properly

locate and operate our fire apparatus.” Pasquotank-Camden Emergency Medical Service offers support of one-direction vehicular parking, adding that “limited parking to one direction will allow emergency vehicles safer and more expedient access to these areas when they are needed.”

In order to rectify the current traffic flow problems that presently exist, staff recommends posting “no-parking” signs in the following locations: 1) the east side of South Martin Luther King Drive, from Shepard Street to Road Street and 2) the east side of Cale Street between Shepard Street and South Road Street. The posting of “no-parking” signs at these locations will restrict parking to the *west side only* in the Hugh Cale community area encompassing the American Legion Hut. Furthermore, staff proposes that the Public Works Department of City of Elizabeth City erect all signs as soon as possible; the signs will be red and white in color and read, “NO PARKING THIS SIDE OF THE STREET.”

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

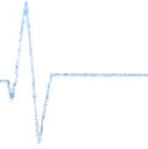
By motion, authorize staff to post “NO PARKING THIS SIDE OF THE STREET” signs on the east side of South Martin Luther King Drive, from Shepard Street to Road Street (and) the east side of Cale Street between Shepard Street and South Road Street.





**PASQUOTANK-CAMDEN
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE**

Jerry Newell, *EMS Director*
Walter Meads, *Assistant EMS Director*



February 23, 2015

Chief Eddie Buffaloe
Elizabeth City Police Department
302 East Colonial Avenue
Elizabeth City, NC 27909

Dear Chief Buffaloe,

It has come to my attention that "The American Legion Hut" has reopened at 611 South Martin Luther King Street in Elizabeth City. Of latest concern for that area, inclusive of Shepard and Cale Streets, is the ability of emergency vehicles and equipment to access and travel these areas efficiently and safely in the time of need.

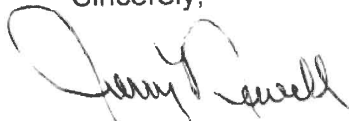
I am in support of designating the following areas as one-direction vehicular parking:

- South Martin Luther King Street from Shepard Street to South Road Street
- Cale Street from Shepard Street to South Road Street

I feel that limiting parking to one direction will allow emergency vehicles safer and more expedient access to these areas when they are needed.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,


Jerry Newell



CITY OF ELIZABETH CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

March 3, 2015

Chief Eddie Buffaloe,

I am sending you this letter in acknowledgement of our concerns with the current vehicle parking on Cale Street and South Martin Luther King Drive between Shepherd Street and South Road Street.

The City of Elizabeth City currently allows parking on both sides of these streets. If vehicles park on both sides of the street at the same location we will only have 10 feet of passing clearance on MLK and 3 feet on Cale St. This not only could possibly hinder our response to emergencies in this area, it could also create a situation where we do not have enough room to properly locate and operate our fire apparatus.

We are asking that you consider limiting parking to one side of the street in these areas. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniel G. Ellinwood
Assistant Fire Marshal