

News Release

For Immediate Release: October 9, 2020

Durham Begins Shared Streets Pilot Project October 12

Portions of Watts Street and Glendale Avenue Closed to Through Traffic

DURHAM, N.C. – Beginning next week, residents living on Watts Street and Glendale Avenue will soon enjoy more space for pedestrian and bicycle travel thanks to a pilot project by the City of Durham’s Transportation Department.

The first part of department’s Shared Streets Pilot Project begins on Monday, October 12 with through-traffic closures on these two streets in central Durham. Watts Street from Lamond Avenue to West Club Boulevard as well as Glendale Avenue from West Geer Street to Englewood Avenue will close to vehicular through traffic. Residents and motorists will see barricades, yard signs, and orange safety cones denoting these streets closed to through traffic, and the Transportation team will be monitoring these areas to make any minor adjustments as needed. Each of these streets will also have a designated “Street Champion,” who are volunteer residents near or on one of the shared streets to help the Transportation Department monitor the program, such as making sure street closure signs remain in place.

According to Shared Streets Project Manager Dale McKeel with the City’s Transportation Department, these through-traffic closures are a method for creating a safer pedestrian and bicycle experience on these roads. “These closures allow for more space for residents to enjoy the outdoors, recreate, exercise, and socialize while allowing for physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic,” McKeel said.

Vehicular through traffic will be restricted on shared streets with an advisory speed of 15 miles per hour or less. Local residents, emergency vehicles, deliveries, and trash collection vehicles will still have access to these streets. McKeel says that while shared streets is envisioned to be a temporary pilot project lasting until spring 2021, it could also lead to more permanent traffic calming measures on these streets.

According to McKeel, the Shared Streets Pilot Project has been in the works since this summer, and was recently boosted by a [\\$25,000 grant](#) received from the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Streets for Pandemic Response and Recovery Program. As one of 10 U.S. cities to receive the grant, Durham partnered with SpiritHouse, a local grassroots organization, to concentrate on focused engagement with communities most affected by COVID-19.

The NACTO award is being used for the overall costs of the program, including purchasing additional materials for closures, and for enhanced engagement and design work on five other streets in East Durham: Alma, Benjamine, Spruce, Maple, and Taylor Streets. Design work on those streets has been ongoing since August, and implementation for their shared streets closures will be at the end of this month.

For more information about the Shared Streets Pilot Project, visit the [project website](#) or contact Transportation staff by [email](#) or by calling (919) 560-4366, ext. 36421.

About the City of Durham Transportation Department

The [Transportation Department](#) remains steadfast in its commitment to providing and maintaining quality,

multimodal infrastructure to improve mobility, promote environmental sustainability, and enhance the quality of life for current and future Durham residents, businesses, and visitors. To learn more, follow the department on [Twitter](#).

About SpiritHouse

[SpiritHouse](#) is a multigenerational Black women-led cultural organizing tribe with a rich legacy of using art, culture, and media to support the empowerment and transformation of communities through grassroots programs, cultural organizing, and community collaborations. SpiritHouse contracted with the City of Durham in 2020 through its Community-Rooted Partners program. To learn more, follow SpiritHouse on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

About NACTO

[The National Association of City Transportation Officials](#) is an association of 86 major North American cities and transit agencies formed to exchange transportation ideas, insights, and practices and cooperatively approach national transportation issues. NACTO's mission is to build cities as places for people with safe, sustainable, accessible, and equitable transportation choices that support a strong economy and vibrant quality of life. The City of Durham Transportation Department joined NACTO in early 2020.

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