Request to Reconsider Howard Street One-Way Direction

South Depot Street → Appalachian Street

Submitted to: Boone Town Council
Submitted by: Ian Robinson
Date: 9/23/2026

Requested Change:
I respectfully request that the Town of Boone reconsider the direction of one-way traffic on Howard Street between South Depot Street and Appalachian Street as part of the ongoing Howard Street Improvement Project.

Current direction:
Appalachian St. → Howard St. → S. Depot St.

Proposed direction:
S. Depot St. → Howard St. → Appalachian St.

This proposal would keep Howard Street one-way. It would simply reverse the direction of travel on this section. No change is being requested for the other sections of Howard Street.

Why Consider Reversing the Direction?

1. The surrounding road network favors the Rivers Street/Appalachian State connection
The section of Howard Street between Depot and Appalachian serves as a connection between downtown and the Appalachian State University/Rivers Street area.
The 2025 NCDOT traffic data show: (see page 4)
Rivers Street — 16,000 AADT
W. King Street — 14,500 AADT
Rivers Street also provides a larger roadway connection into the Appalachian State University area, while King Street is a more constrained downtown corridor.
The proposed direction would allow Howard Street to function as a connection toward Appalachian/Rivers Street, rather than directing traffic toward the King Street/Depot Street area.

2. King Street and Depot Street are already a heavily pedestrian-oriented area
The King Street/Depot Street area experiences significant pedestrian activity. Directing Howard Street traffic toward this intersection potentially adds vehicle movements to an already busy pedestrian environment.
Reversing Howard Street would allow traffic to move away from the King/Depot area and toward Appalachian Street.
I am requesting that the Town evaluate whether this would provide a more efficient distribution of traffic through the existing downtown network.

3. The new parallel parking configuration supports reconsidering the direction
The Howard Street Improvement Project is substantially changing the street, including the addition of new parallel parking.
With the current direction of travel, the new parking is positioned on the left side of the travel lane. Reversing the direction would place the parking on the right side of the travel lane, creating a more conventional relationship between moving traffic and curbside parking/loading. This should be considered as part of the overall street design rather than treating traffic direction and parking configuration as separate issues.

4. The timing provides an opportunity to evaluate the change
The Howard Street project is currently under construction. The Town's September 21, 2026 construction update indicates that paving is currently progressing on the Appalachian-to-Depot section. Because the permanent traffic configuration has not yet been fully established, this is an appropriate time to evaluate whether the selected direction best serves the completed street design and surrounding transportation network.

5. Business owner and manager consideration:
Prior to presenting this proposal to the Town Council, I personally contacted the owners and/or managers of businesses that are directly impacted by the current one-way configuration of Howard Street. I presented the proposed change with each of them.

All of the individuals listed below expressed their support for the proposed reversal of the one-way direction:

Taylor Williams- Footsloggers
Amy Forrester- Fizz Ed
Paul Sheer- Reel Boone
Bill Parish- Highway Robbery
Rosa Dargon- Hands Gallery
John Mena- Haircut 101
Kat Robinson- Appalachia Threads
Josiah Davis- Venture
Kim Greene- Lililu On King
Uijin Park- Espresso News
Bella Fishman- Fairfield Appts.

Their feedback provides direct input from local business owners and managers whose businesses are located on or are directly impacted by this section of Howards Street.

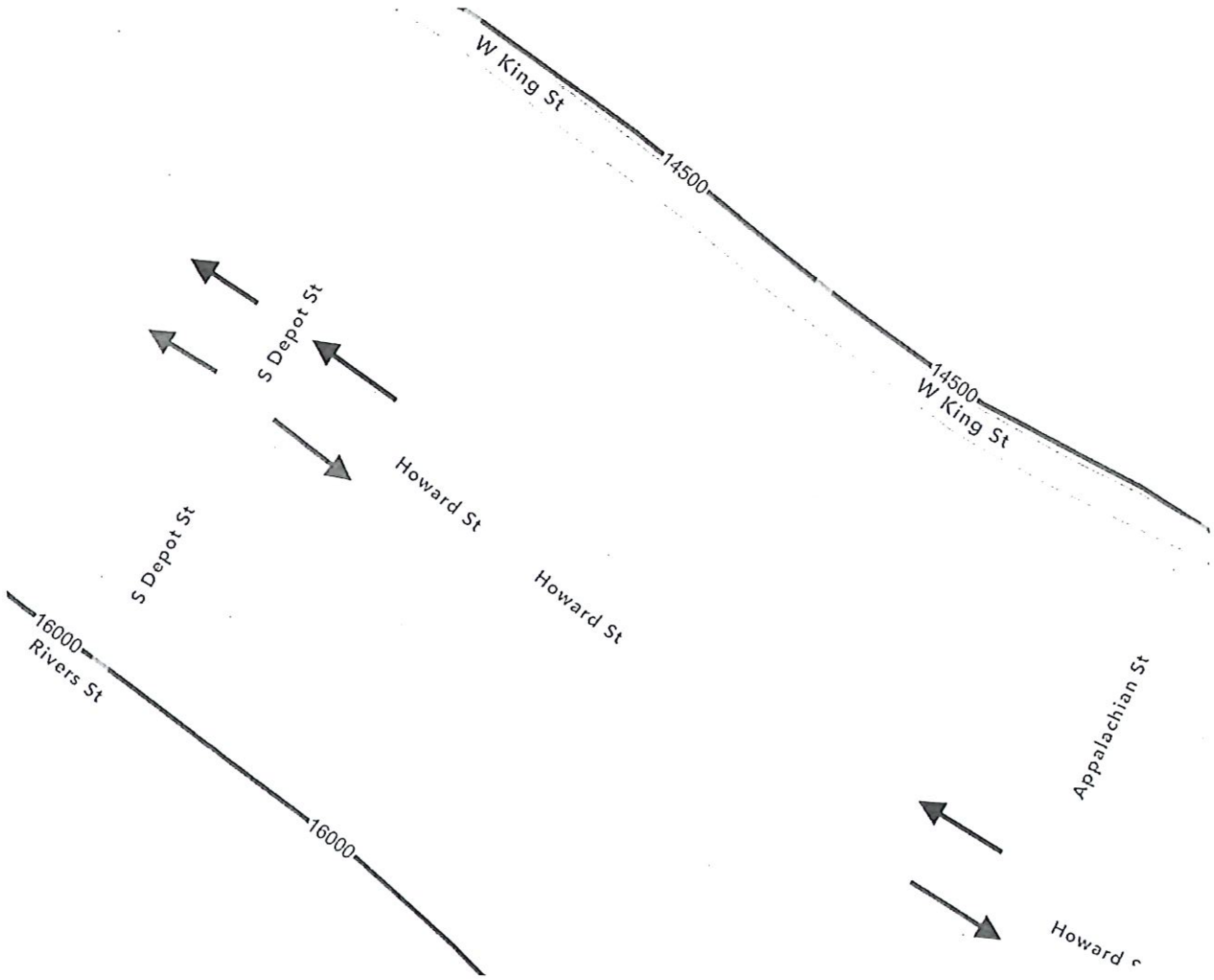
The evaluation should consider:

NCDOT traffic-volume data
Traffic movement at King/Depot
Rivers Street and Appalachian State traffic
Pedestrian activity
The new parallel parking configuration
Emergency and delivery access
Traffic and pedestrian safety
Effects on surrounding streets
If the Town is not prepared to make the change immediately:
I request that the Town conduct a traffic-flow comparison of both one-way configurations before the final traffic-control signs and pavement markings are permanently established.

The goal is not simply to change the direction of Howard Street. The goal is to determine which direction best fits the new street design and the existing downtown transportation network.

Current traffic direction

Proposed traffic direction



Note: yellow dots are monitored locations

River street drops from 16000 to 5500

King street stays consistent at 14500

NCDOT AADT WEB MAP

