

Downtown Commission – May Updates

TO: Downtown Commission
DATE: May 11, 2017
PREPARED BY: Dana Frankel, Downtown Development Specialist
SUBJECT: Updates on downtown projects and initiatives

Budget Process FY 17/18

The City Manager's budget was presented at the May 9th Council Meeting. Downtown projects in the Capital Improvements Program include: Thomas Wolfe and US Cellular Center renovations, Asheville Art Museum upgrades, turf replacement program for Pack Square Park, replacement of vaulted sidewalks on Broadway (currently underway), Coxe Avenue feasibility and design (Patton to Southside), S. Lexington Feasibility and Design (Patton to Southside), Greenway Connectors design.

There will be a public hearing on the proposed on May 23rd. Council is scheduled to adopt the budget on June 13th.

Haywood Street – Short Term Use

Staff is working on planning and implementation of temporary uses for the City-owned sites at 68 Haywood Street and 33 Page Avenue. Temporary uses recommended by the Haywood Street Advisory Team were: mobile food vending, vendor markets, interactive public art, designated performance space, raised garden beds and movable seating.

Following an implementation plan provided to Council, staff is proceeding to prepare the site to be used for temporary uses such as those proposed. An update will be presented to Council on May 23.

Site improvements to be initiated include: clearing gravel from portions of the surface, repairing the concrete, installing electricity, and placing trees and seating on the Haywood Street site. The Page Avenue site is being included as one of four community garden sites in the Office of Sustainability's recently launched Edibles Initiative.

Access and maintenance at the Haywood Street property will be managed by the City's Parks Department. Rules will be consistent with other spaces managed by the Parks Department, including open hours of dawn to dusk and the prohibition of smoking.

Timeline update:

Complete site improvements - summer 2017

Open to public access and programming – summer 2017

Phase I temporary use – one year (through summer 2018)

Phase II temporary uses – two years (through summer 2020)

Goals:

By initiating “Phase I” improvements and accommodating various uses on the site, the community and City can learn more about what works, what doesn’t, what’s needed in terms of further investment or engagement, and how to maximize success of the site both temporarily and for the long term.

Haywood Street Visioning – Long Term Use

Staff is working on an RFQ for design services to create design options and management practices based on the community advisory team’s recommendations.

Pack Square Park

Both the lawn and Splashville are open.

A Pack Square Park Master Plan is underway, commissioned by the NC Arboretum (with Pack Square Park Conservancy funds). Staff will provide an update on that project and seek feedback from the Downtown Commission in June.

Pritchard Park

Pritchard Park landscape improvements began in April. Programming has and will continue throughout the construction period. The project is slated for completion by the end of July, pending factors such as weather. A new project page is available with updates: www.ashevillenc.gov/pritchardparkimprovements.

Sidewalk and Street Work

College Street Sidewalk

The sidewalk is being replaced on the north side of College Street between N. Lexington and Rankin Avenue. Work began on May 1st and will be completed by the end of the month. There will be a new sidewalk, curb and gutters, and approximately 1 foot of additional sidewalk width is being added. The work is being done in 20 ft. sections.

Broadway Vaulted Sidewalk

Work is underway to replace the section of sidewalk on Broadway between Walnut and the alley next to Strada. The section of sidewalk is closed.

Walkable Wall Street

Walkable Wall Street is scheduled for Saturday, May 12th and is being planned in collaboration with Strive Not To Drive. The street will be closed to vehicles from 2 PM to 12 AM. Businesses will offer special promotions and activities in the street, a passport program will be offered and Asheville on Bikes will start and end their Bright Light Biker ride on Wall Street. This is the third in a series of events to test Wall Street as a pedestrian-only street. The goal is to support businesses while promoting walkability, pedestrian safety and place-making.