

Link/Edwards/Denson CDO

#27 Extension of the College Square Outdoor Dining Pilot Program

Directions towards a permanent public space in College Square:

- Authorize staff to close College Square to vehicular traffic, allowing for emergency access as well as construction and large loading access with advanced notice.
- Authorize staff to pursue concepts and funding sources to create a vibrant and inclusive public space via a comprehensive public input process that broadly engages the overall community with a goal of inclusivity and diversity of age, race, culture, and socioeconomic status; surveying Downtown business owners, inviting artists' input, and soliciting feedback from special event organizers and other stakeholders.
- This process should be overseen by a diverse citizen visioning committee and include community-wide creative visioning processes that invite ideas and proposals from the general citizenry, enabling equitable feedback on such ideas and proposals from the greater community.
- Funding to begin this process will be identified in the FY2022 budget and through other sources including but not limited to grants, donors, public fundraising, stimulus funding, and/or a future TSPLOST Program.

Comments:

This process should include creative & inclusive community input/feedback/concept development process such as charrettes, Pecha Kucha, and creative placemaking principles. Guidance should be sought from public space advocacy organizations such as Project for Public Spaces, Center for New Urbanism, Urban Land Institute, American Planning Association, the UGA College of Environmental Design, and others. Public art elements should be determined in coordination with the Athens Cultural Affairs Commission. Outside design professionals should be selected with the guidance of the citizen committee.

Resources/References:

<https://www.pechakucha.com/>

<https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

<https://www.pps.org/article/5-steps-to-making-places>

<https://www.pps.org/article/grplacefeat>

<https://thecityfix.com/blog/public-spaces-10-principles-for-connecting-people-and-the-streets-priscila-pacheco/>

<https://www.cnu.org/resources/on-the-park-bench/equity-driven-planning>

<https://www.planning.org/knowledgebase/creativeplacemaking/>

<https://www.webjunction.org/content/dam/WebJunction/Documents/webJunction/2015-04/guide-outside-the-box-placemaking.pdf>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20191103232857/http://brinshore.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Best-Practices-for-Creative-Placemaking-UL-March-April-2017-web.pdf>

<https://www.routledge.com/Community-Visioning-for-Place-Making-A-Guide-to-Visual-Preference-Surveys/Nelessen/p/book/9780367622831>

**THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY
COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM**

SUBJECT: Extension of the College Square Outdoor Dining Pilot Program

DATE: February 26, 2021

BUDGET INFORMATION:

REVENUES: N/A

EXPENSES:

 OPERATIONAL: \$1,200/month

FUNDING SOURCE: Existing Contingency Funding Allocation

COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED ON: April 6, 2021

PURPOSE:

To request the Mayor and Commission extend the closure of College Square to through traffic in support of outdoor dining and pedestrian use through July 31, 2021.

HISTORY:

1. In November 2016, ACCGov engaged independent engineering firms to complete a traffic study on Clayton Street to determine what opportunities were present to change lane configuration, on-street parking, dedicated bike lanes, increase sidewalk widths, and impact from potential street closures. The study showed that the closing of College Avenue (College Square) between Clayton and Broad streets would not have a significant impact on traffic flow.
2. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.
3. On March 11, 2020, WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic.
4. On March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared a National Emergency in the United States in response to COVID-19.
5. On March 14, 2020, Governor Brian Kemp declared a Public Health Emergency in the State of Georgia.
6. On March 15, 2020, the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in Athens-Clarke County.
7. On March 16, 2020, the Mayor and Commission (M&C) adopted an ordinance for the first Declaration of Local State of Emergency in Athens-Clarke County.

8. On March 24, 2020, the first COVID-19-related death was confirmed in Athens-Clarke County.
9. On June 15, 2020, the Roadway Safety Audit Team (RSAT) performed a site visit to the College Avenue and Broad Street intersection and identified safety concerns and potential projects.
10. On June 25, 2020, the M&C approved a six month closure of College Avenue between Broad Street and Clayton Street. The M&C also allocated \$100,000 from the contingency budget to fund an outdoor dining pilot within the close section of College Avenue.
11. On June 25, 2020, the M&C also approved a project to widen the crosswalk on Broad Street at College Avenue and the UGA Arch.
12. By August 18, 2020, staff completed the widening of the crosswalk at Broad Street and College Avenue.
13. On October 8, 2020, the Central Services and Transportation and Public Works departments completed the installation of picnic tables, planters, and waste receptacles and associated block of College Avenue was closed to through traffic. With this action, the 180 day pilot was initiated.
14. On December 23, 2020, the Transportation and Public Works Department issued a traffic report reviewing the impacts to traffic and safety as a result of the temporary road closure on College Avenue.

FACTS & ISSUES:

1. The pedestrian volume crossing Broad Street at the College Avenue intersection at the University of Georgia Arch is one of the highest in Athens-Clarke County, with a typical one hour volume of over 1,800 pedestrians.
2. The Roadway Safety Audit Team was charged to review the area of Broad Street between Lumpkin and College and the area of College Avenue between Broad and Clayton for various improvements that could improve traffic flow and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists in this highly walked and driven corridor.
3. The RSAT identified safety concerns and projects to address those concerns. The projects are separated into "Short-Term", "Intermediate", and "Long Term." The Short-Term projects are typically less costly, can be accomplished with little to no design, and implemented quickly. The Intermediate projects are typically more expensive, may take some simple design, and could possibly be implemented fairly quickly. The Long-Range projects are typically more costly requiring funding to be programmed, require design (with possible right-of-way), and would require future scheduling.

4. Below is a listing of the concerns and potential projects identified by the RSAT (History #9):

#	Location	Safety Concern Identified	Project Identified	Time Frame
1	Broad Street and College Avenue Intersection	High volume of pedestrians	Widen the crosswalk to allow for a greater volume of pedestrians to cross Broad Street	Intermediate
2	College Avenue between Clayton and Broad	High volume of pedestrians creates safety concerns	Convert College Avenue between Clayton and Broad to a pedestrian plaza. Can be a temporary cost-effective project, and then built permanently with further beatification measures	Intermediate/ Long-Term
3	Broad Street and College Avenue Intersection	High volume of pedestrians creates signal timing issues	Convert intersection into a scramble that allows for pedestrians to cross at all directions during pedestrian phase	Long-Term
4	Lumpkin Street and Broad Street Intersection	Queuing of traffic waiting for the Left Turn signal to go Southbound on Lumpkin creates safety and traffic concerns through the Broad and College Intersection	Extend the Left Turn vehicle storage approximately 250'	Long-Term

5. Throughout the year, College Square is closed for special permitted events. The impact to other streets/signals is not noticeable. The temporary closing of that block is positive for the pedestrians crossing Broad Street as it removes the vehicle/pedestrian conflicts, particularly with left turn movements coming out of College Avenue onto Broad Street.

6. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an extraordinarily negative economic impact on small businesses in Athens-Clarke County. Restaurants have been hit particularly hard. The College Square Outdoor Dining Pilot Project included the purchase of tables, chairs, planters, shade structures, waste bins, etc., that will create a pleasant environment for downtown restaurant patrons to enjoy a dining experience in a safe outdoor environment.

7. Since the creation of the outdoor dining area, the Public Information Office has solicited feedback through an online form that is advertised on area signage. Since the opening of the pilot area, 78 individuals have completed the survey. In total, 97.4% of these respondents support the permanent closure of College Square to vehicular traffic. Long form answers from the survey are available in **Attachment #1**.

8. The Central Services Department has conducted randomized daily assessments of use since January 7, 2021 (**Attachment #2**). Overall these assessments have resulting in the following observations.
 - On average, 4.2 tables per hour are occupied at the site; 5.4 patrons per hour are observed to have locally-purchased products during the use of the pilot area.
 - Utilization is very temperature dependent. The warmer it is, the more the site is used.
 - Utilization is higher in the afternoons.
 - Pan handling, while present, is not a consistent problem.
 - Use is lowest on Sundays and Thursdays.
 - In the 180 days operating period, the site is estimated to be associated with nearly \$78,000 in locally-purchase products. The resulting sales taxes from these products is over \$6,200.

9. Transportation and Public Works has completed a traffic study to identify the impacts of the temporary closure of College Avenue (**Attachment #3**). Among other things, this report finds “There does not appear to be an impact to the downtown traffic circulation with closing of College Avenue at Clayton Street.” and that “In fact, it has a positive impact on the movement on Broad Street and increased safety for the vast amount of pedestrians crossing Broad Street.” The report makes the following recommendations:
 - As the pandemic lessens and downtown traffic increases, Traffic Engineering has the ability, if needed, to collect traffic volumes and make programing/timing modifications to address traffic circulation and safety needs.
 - From a traffic movement perspective Transportation and Public Works supports the closure of College Avenue from Clayton Street to Broad Street.

10. Early indictors support the permanent closure of College Avenue between Clayton Street and Broad Street to utilize it as a pedestrian-oriented community space. Should the M&C act to approve this extension, staff will take the following actions:
 - Continue online surveys (Facts & Issues #7);
 - Continue daily randomize surveys of area utilization (Facts and Issues #8);
 - Survey downtown businesses about their opinions on the use of College Square;
 - Develop concepts for how the space may be utilized if the site is permanently closed; and,
 - Present options for the future of College Square at a M&C Work Session in the late spring.

11. It is important to note, that the current configuration of College Square is not a long term solution if this activity is to be sustained beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. A permanent conversion of the space may require a process to engage the community, business owners, special events sponsors, and other stakeholders. Such a conversion is likely to require very significant capital funding for hardscape renovations, utility reconfiguration, crosswalk

improvements, landscaping, and/or site amenities. Staff will continue to identify potential funding sources for investment in College Square. Such sources could include grants, stimulus funding, and/or a future TSPLOST Program.

12. These recommendations support the following Mayor and Commission Strategic Commitments:

- Healthy, Livable, Sustainable Athens-Clarke County
- Transportation Mobility and Connectivity
- Shared Prosperity
- Accountable and Responsive Government

OPTIONS:

1. Mayor and Commission extend the closure of College Square to through traffic in support of outdoor dining and pedestrian use through July 31, 2021.
2. Mayor and Commission do not extend the College Square closure.
3. Mayor and Commission defined option.

DEPARTMENT: Central Services

Prepared by: Andrew Saunders



Andrew Saunders
Central Services Director

2/26/2021

Date

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS:

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION: Option #1



Manager

March 9, 2021

Date

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment #1 - College Square Online Survey Responses
- Attachment #2 - College Square Utilization Survey Results
- Attachment #3 - College Avenue Traffic Study

1. I agree that it should only be permanent if you allow alcohol to be in the plaza while sitting at a table. This will help restaurants as everyone knows that is how restaurants make their money (liquor sales). Clarke County's response to COVID was swift which was great for our community but it was also hard on the businesses. We need to help them make back their profits, so I really do think you should permit beer/ wine/ liquor while seated at a table especially if you are considering making this permanent (because it will cause major traffic issues).
2. Long time coming. Great plan, can't wait for it to be permanent
3. I think it is awesome to have a place in the middle of town to sit and eat, or just enjoy time with friends and family. Also, the addition of all of the sanitation stations is great! I love the whole idea of College Square and would definitely enjoy it becoming a permanent fixture with the possibility of a small stage for live venues! Thank you!
4. I am SOOOOOOOOOO excited!!! This should have happened decades ago! So glad you're doing it. THANK YOU!!!
5. It's been only a day and I'm already in love. The public space adds a very welcoming and safe component to a city afflicted by a pandemic. In this single day alone, I've spent hours on these lovey tables, eating, conversing, and enjoying Athens. Walkable cities are the future for Athens. Please keep this space!
6. Imagine my surprise when I walked downtown to find a lovely new seating area! I had no idea this project was happening, but I'm head over heels for everything about it. At first, I was worried about the loss of parking, but this is more than worth it. Public spaces have been shown to be essential not only in the age of COVID, but in all circumstances. I hope that we can make this new development of our city permanent. The Classic City is made by its residents, the pedestrians who mingle on our downtown streets. This space can only make it better- and it already has.
7. My family is supportive of College Square Plaza being made permanent. When we travel to cities such as Chattanooga, Asheville, and Greenville, we love the park areas where visitors can gather and enjoy being outdoors in the central shopping district. College Square Plaza could add to the positive experience visitors have when they visit Athens.
8. this project is amazing!! so much room to study and walk and eat together, love it :)
9. Maybe adding more umbrellas to tables because if it rains, tables without umbrellas stay wet for a while.
10. I really love this idea. It's very nice and quiet. I will be coming here often to eat and work on school work. It's very clean and a nice outdoor play for down town. If it was to be permanent, it would be nice to have grass down the middle!
11. If became permanent it would be nice to add grass.
12. Absolutely LOVE this idea - which I saw for the first time today (Oct.16). As a native Athenian, I have always wanted downtown Athens to have a pedestrian zone. Other cities, especially ones in Europe, all have them, and it works out great. I would love if someday Clayton could also be a pedestrian zone. Makes shopping and walking so much more enjoyable. That improves Athens' quality of life.

13. This is a fantastic idea and a great way to make Athens more pedestrian friendly! Thank you. Sam
 14. Love this idea! A great place to grab a bite after class and it helps the local restaurants that have less tables
 15. This place is awesome! Please keep it. Also, please hang string lights above the buildings to enhance the aesthetic.
 16. I love this project!!
 17. Love it!! Great for pandemic and social distancing. Increases foot traffic too!
 18. The square is fantastic and even adding in green space upon the pilot's completion would further cement how great of a spot this is. Alcohol after 9 pm should be allowed as long as it's in a plastic cup.
 19. "Long overdue. Keep it closed permanently.
 20. The only problem is with the naming. "College Square Plaza" is redundant. A plaza is defined as a public square. It's just "College Square" Has been for some time.
 21. Thank you!
 22. "Hello, My wife and I are a musical duo and have been playing on the corner in front of Heery's for the past couple months. We really like the plaza and hope it stays! Last Saturday night the preachers who think they own that corner MOVED to another location further down the street! It seems they don't get enough content for their YouTube channels when we are playing. We hope that trend continues as we continue to busk on weekends when we don't have gigs! Have a GREAT day! - David Fioritto, Musical Director; FreQ 432; Random Acts; <http://www.random-acts.net> "
 23. I regularly walk through there and take the bus past it. Every time it's busy with people sitting outside, socializing, etc. It's made me realize Athens downtown doesn't have outdoor spaces to enjoy the nice weather, even though we have nice weather during such a large part of the year. I support maintaining it as a pedestrian only section of downtown.
 24. This area is very convenient. I'd love it if you could add more tables with umbrellas
- I. Like the way that collage av is now .i have benn here since 1982 and i have seen things come and go. But that one i never did see is one coming you all done a real good thing . since is new thing came up i have seen more people coming downtown and enjoying them selfs. I do hope that you all will keep this going on for years we did need something new in athens for a long time and this was it a park downtown.please after the 6th months are up I do hope and wish that the new part of athens will be there for more years too come. Thanks for the new part of athens thanks. If you all do keep this place going for now on. May i please name it ? If i can I would like to name it "My LITTLE HAPPY PLACE" why did i pick that name? Well. Your alway happy to see your friends right and you do need a place too meet at. Right ok and it take a littel while too get there too meet .right so lets put it all together and you'll have"my littel happy place . please name it that thanks.from dino palazzola

25. I think this is a wonderful idea. I love the idea of an outdoor space even after (if there is an after) the pandemic. I would request perhaps wipes in the same fashion that hand sanitizer is offered. Also, because the street isn't level, my coffee slid and spilled. Only then did I notice the remnants of the previous user's coffee spill from I'm guessing the same issue. Also, I don't know if wifi would be available, but it seems like it would be useful considering the wifi at the local establishments should be reserved for their patrons. I adore the outdoor space, and I hope my feedback was useful. I am thrilled to have a place to eat outside downtown that isn't on the grass of north campus.
26. This is a great part of downtown. I've used the tables frequently.
27. On a Sunday afternoon, We enjoyed a snack from one of the businesses and we sat at a hexagonal table and enjoyed eating it. The family of five enjoyed our time here.
28. We love it. It makes downtown much more pedestrian friendly. Great for visitors and businesses. Lots of students enjoying the area as well.
29. I absolutely love the plaza being open! It's great to have a common area to sit and so nice to be able to explore the shops etc. without worrying about the traffic. It would be so cool to do a live music concert series there to support local musicians and businesses!
30. I love the way it looks and that area just feels so home-y. My family and I love to eat outside but like to have different options of where to patron it's great!!
31. I do think the area should be closed because once covid is over itll be a great gathering area or football and festivals. Once permanently approved that the appearance be improved upon to be more architecturally & visually appealing.
32. Love this space for doing homework to get out of my apartment during the pandemic. I have, however, had some unpleasant encounters with people approaching and joining my table asking for money. I feel as if actions should be taken for College Square Plaza to feel safer for students and other community members. Perhaps more signs stating "one party per table" or even a security member on staff observing for safety. Not only did I feel unsafe with random people repeatedly asking me for money, but for COVID-19 reasons as well. I understand they are just as much a part of the community as I am and respect that, but I also believe this could be potentially unsafe when socially distancing guidelines are not followed. I hope Collge Sqaure Plaza remains open for all to enjoy in a safe manner.
33. "Love it! Takes away a pedestrian/traffic issue and creates a safe area for people to meet, eat, etc.
34. Consider making this area more of a green space for aesthetics and appeal."
35. The college square plaza is a great idea. Not only has it improved the life of everyone in Athens by providing an outdoor seating area downtown, it's really helped a lot of local businesses that are relying on increased takeout in the area as a result of Covid. The road isn't that important for vehicle traffic as there are multiple other routes. My only complaint is a number of homeless people harass people in the area for food and money.
36. I was just downtown for the first time since this was implemented, and I'm very impressed! I was able to grab food and actually relax downtown, which hasn't happened since March. Even after the

pandemic is over, I think this closure will be beneficial and make downtown more pedestrian friendly. Thanks for implementing this, and I hope it stays!

37. "I like the idea that college students and our community has a place to sit for a while shopping or just studying for college in our downtown area. It's
38. Also a great way to get outside and catch up with friends too."
39. I was running errands downtown yesterday and was able to freely cross the plaza several times. The closure makes that part of downtown inviting and less stressful to navigate (both as a pedestrian AND a motorist). Please keep this wonderful addition to our downtown, I am looking forward to enjoying this space in the future.
40. "Please add bike parking and encourage bulldawg bikeshare to put bike corrals there. Designate a place for a monument to celebrate diversity. Have a farmers market there that accepts ebt. And if there is any way possible make it a place where alcohol can be sold and consumed during evening hours.
41. This area can be so much and I am extremely supportive of it being permanently closed.
42. I absolutely love it and have been hoping for this for many years.
43. It's awesome! Need more tables and more plants. It's beautiful and was needed years ago. Please keep it!!!!
44. This is a great addition to the Athens community
45. A great project that follows other urban models promoting pedestrian traffic, which in turn promotes commerce, a healthy downtown environment, and creates an important community atmosphere necessary for continued development. I'd like to see a small amphitheater (with electricity), play area for kids, and improved landscaping.
46. I think is a good idea to continually expand this part of downtown to make the area more pedestrian-friendly. It increases pedestrian safety, enhances the ambiance of the area and provides space for visitors to pause and enjoy downtown.
47. It is a wonderful idea that smoothly connects campus to downtown and invites students to come into town'.
48. Very pretty, love to spend time there when we visit Athens with my family.
49. This closure makes a wonderful pedestrian focal point to downtown and greatly enhances the overall downtown appeal.
50. It is a wonderful spot in the city to spend time with friends and family. Keep it!
51. I ate lunch there about a month ago and very much enjoyed it. It helps create a community feeling with that square open. I would very much like to keep it closed to car traffic.

52. Great idea! Should have been done years ago! So glad you are doing this.
53. I love the idea of turning that center front part of downtown into a plaza. I believe it will breath life into Athens downtown and help to promote outdoor space and activities to this area. It will be a good tourist attraction and breath of fresh air for the local Athenians. As a long term Athens resident, I do my best to avoid driving down that area of College Ave already since there is a lot of pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Since it closes regularly for events downtown already, I believe this is a great idea, especially since it is an unnecessary travel route with so many alternate routes right around it.
54. "Setting this area aside for pedestrians would be a wonderful change to the downtown scenario. It gives us a place to congregate and spread out outdoors and no other area like that exists currently. Alternatively, leaving it as a one way street only adds to congestion. There are a myriad of other ways to navigate downtown and having this area as a walkway would somewhat eliminate the need for a red light at that Broad and College intersection."
55. I previously wrote a glowing review of the college square plaza, and I still think it's a great idea and should stay in place, but my experience this afternoon was scary and I won't be returning anytime soon. We got takeout and were eating at one of the picnic tables when a guy walked up within 6 feet of us and asked for money. My husband put his mask on and motioned for the guy to back up and said that he didn't have cash. The guy took this as being shooed away and threatened violence. He walked away but continued taking loudly about his physical prowess and how he could beat up my husband. Not sure if there's anything ACC can do to prevent this, but it is a detriment to public spaces like this.
56. Wonderful idea!
57. "Closing College Square to vehicles is a wonderful idea and a welcome addition to downtown Athens. It simplifies traffic flow and increases the attraction to downtown. I hope it becomes permanent. And, I hope this is just the beginning of closing downtown space to vehicles! "
58. I support College Square being permanently closed to vehicular traffic. More pedestrian areas and outdoor dining options are great for our city! Thank you, Mayor and Commission, for piloting this project.
59. "I fully support the permanent closure of College Square and the creation of a plaza for outdoor gatherings. Athens will be healthier and more socially sustainable if College Avenue remains closed. However, the Mayor and Commission should partner with local business owners and work to remove the prohibition on serving alcohol in this space. It would also be safer to allow alcohol to be served in an area like the College Square Plaza. Unlike the parklets, the plaza is barricaded and protected from an active roadway with substantial, car-stopping barriers. The distance between dinners and cars that are turning, backing out and traversing the roadway creates a more appropriate environment for serving dinners. Allowing alcohol to be served to restaurant patrons in this area would also encourage more outdoor dining year round, and may garner support for creating more of these kinds of spaces in Athens. Thank you for your service and consideration. "
60. The additional usable pedestrian space is much appreciated, and it will also remove the traffic flow nightmare of that intersection with East Broad which was always backed up and slow when it was a three-way.

61. I like the idea of a plaza downtown. That street was always too busy when it was open, especially at the intersection of Broad. Also, I like the idea that it is handicap-friendly as my wife is disabled and uses a scooter. Thank you for your progressive initiatives and keeping Athens at the progressive forefront!
62. "I like it! Add some shade*, nicer tables, more places to sit w/out tables, planters and trees in the middle, etc. to spruce it up** and it will be great. -Leslye Queen *see Barrow Elementary School **see Burlington, VT and Winchester, VA "
63. Thanks for trying this - it is long overdue. There need to be spaces available to simply sit awhile, without being expected to buy anything immediately. A creative solution to panhandlers and the amplified Bible thumper guy would be great too.
64. I work downtown and having more recreational areas away from cars to eat lunch is great."Would love to see a weekly live music set-up for local musicians. Extending the open container permanenter for places like Walker's. Schedule local events for artists, merchandisers, etc. "
65. This is such a great idea, and we really like the way it looks! Very welcoming and relaxing - especially without all the traffic that used to be in that area. We hope y'all make this permanent!
66. This has been a long time coming. The idea for closing it and making it a park has been around a long time and I'm glad someone is finally doing it.
67. Having the college square plaza has been such a fun and important development for our community. My hope is that with the permanent closure of the college square plaza, more people will want to congregate downtown and have a safe area to do so. Also, I hope that this will inspire more street closures throughout Athens so we have more available and safe outdoor recreation areas. Thank you!
68. This was a much needed addition to the downtown area. Traffic normally chokes the intersection of College and Main in front of the arches, and it is difficult to walk on the sidewalks with students in town. This brings more open, pedestrian-friendly space to downtown Athens.
69. I think it should be transformed into a brick college square. I love it and creates a really good feel.
70. "The plaza enhances the pedestrian experience downtown and makes it easier to cross Broad St to and from campus. Feel that there is minimal impact to driving with the road closure.Would like to see a beautification project of the plaza and Clayton Street. The sidewalks have been torn and patched too many times, and would like to see more trees or plants on Clayton."
71. Find no disadvantages.
72. I've been in the athens area for 10 years and have always said that the College Ave section of downtown should be closed and cobblestoned. It's a perfect location for a plaza locates directly across from the Arch and surrounded by historic buildings. Future possibilities of live music and festivals can only improve the city of Athens appeal to tourism.More green space would be nice, too.

73. I thoroughly enjoy the plaza as a fully pedestrianized space, but I also have noticed some issues with loading zones and deliveries entering the area. I would suggest using bollards that raise and lower depending on the time of day and day of the week. In Florence, Italy, they allow for vehicular traffic and loading/unloading in the morning hours, and then the bollards raise around the time people will be occupying the space the most. In my observations of College Square for class, I noticed that more people were using the sidewalks in the morning hours, and then as the day progressed, they were more likely to walk in the road. I think creating a hybrid between complete closure and a functioning road through implementing timed bollards will allow for more flexibility in the space and maybe a more successful design.
74. I think the addition of College Square Plaza has been wonderful for the community and businesses in downtown Athens. It provides a safe space to eat, study, and ensures that people are able to practice social distancing while supporting businesses that otherwise may not be. Additionally the traffic downtown doesn't seem to be any more congested. I would greatly appreciate if the College Square Plaza became permanent.
75. I really enjoy eating at the college square. It gives students a safe space to hangout that is not on campus, and is more accessible than other campus spaces to the rest of the ACC community. I think we should keep it, plus it's a really cool idea especially for a college town like Athens.
76. I would love to see the College Square Plaza become a permanent fixture of the downtown. It makes my bike commute to campus safer (going through the protected plaza rather than the steep downhill on Jackson), and on pleasant days induces me to make the walk from campus to get lunch from the nearby restaurants. An excellent improvement!
77. Car traffic from this block was always difficult. It was always hard to turn right especially because of the cross-walk. Since its closure, the block has become much more useful. I think more people are eating downtown because they have a place to sit. There are plenty of other places to park or wait, so that businesses shouldn't be too impacted. If it were made permanent, i think adding an Uber/Lyft loading zone on each side (Broad and Clayton) would be very useful.

General Use Information

Average # of Tables Occupied Per Hour	4.2
Average # of Customers with Local Products Per Hour	5.4
Total # of Panhandling Incidents Observed	6 of 49 Visits

Impact of Outdoor Temperature on Utilization

Average Temperature	Average # of Tables Occupied	Average # of Customers with Local Products
30° F	0.2	0.4
40° F	2.4	3.4
50° F	6.8	8.2
60° F	-	-
70° F	20.0	26.0
80° F	-	-
90° F	-	-

Impact of Time of Day and Rain on Utilization

Time of Day	Average # of Tables Occupied		
	No Rain	Light Rain	Moderate Rain
8:00 AM to 9:00 AM	0.3	-	0.0
9:00 AM to 10:00 AM	1.0	0.5	-
10:00 AM to 11:00 AM	2.2	-	0.0
11:00 AM to 12:00 PM	4.0	0.0	4.0
12:00 PM to 1:00 PM	9.3	2.0	-
1:00 PM to 2:00 PM	5.5	-	1.0
2:00 PM to 3:00 PM	9.5	0.0	-
3:00 PM to 4:00 PM	8.5	-	-
4:00 PM to 5:00 PM	10.4	0.0	-
5:00 PM to 6:00 PM	6.0	-	-
6:00 PM to 7:00 PM	1.3	0.0	-
7:00 PM to 8:00 PM	0.0	-	-

Impact of Day of Week on Utilization

Average Temperature	Average # of Tables Occupied	Average # of Customers with Local Products
Sunday	1.1	0.8
Monday	4.0	4.2
Tuesday	5.0	7.2
Wednesday	6.9	9.2
Thursday	0.9	0.6
Friday	3.4	4.2
Saturday	8.0	11.2

Estimated Economic Impact

Average Product Observed Per Hour	Site Use Hours/Day	Pilot Project Days of Use	Estimated Value of Product	Associated Economic Impact	Resulting Sales Tax
5.4	10	180	\$8.00	\$77,760	\$6,220

Athens-Clarke County
TRAFFIC ENGINEERING REPORT

Date: 2/23/2021

LOCATION:

College Avenue, Clayton Street to Broad Street closing

REASON FOR THE INVESTIGATION:

The purpose of this study is evaluate the downtown traffic circulation pursuant to the closing of College Avenue from Clayton Street to Broad Street.

AREA DESCRIPTION:

- College Avenue from Clayton Street to Broad Street is a one-way section with business throughout the block. There are intersecting traffic signals at Clayton Street and at Broad Street. Broad Street pedestrian traffic is extremely heavy, which justified the widening of the crosswalk on Broad Street. The temporary closing of this section of College Avenue removed the traffic accessing Broad Street, which is typically delayed due to the large number of pedestrians crossing Broad Street.
- Broad Street at College Avenue is a unique intersection as the traffic from College Avenue is exiting only with no traffic entering. As well, due the proximately to UGA, the pedestrian traffic is heavy throughout the day and into the evenings. The pedestrian traffic volume crossing Broad Street causes delays to right turning traffic onto Broad Street, therefore the green signal timing for the exiting traffic had to be extended to clear the vehicles. This traffic signal is coordinated with Broad Street corridor, where all signals are vehicle and pedestrian actuated and the extended time causes delays on Broad Street
- Clayton Street at College Avenue is signalized with pedestrian crossings on all four approaches. Clayton Street is a one-way street (eastbound). The College Avenue approach from the north (southbound) is a two way street (north and south).

EXISTING TRAFFIC CONTROL:

Currently:

1. College Avenue at Broad Street traffic signal operates as a pedestrian signal but is still coordinated with the Broad Street corridor. The pedestrian movement is actuated and only cycles when pedestrians push the buttons, which has reduced back up traffic in Broad Street.
2. College Avenue at Clayton Street fixed time traffic signal provides access for southbound College Avenue traffic to turn left onto Clayton Street and provides pedestrian movements.
3. Clayton Street at Thomas Street is an actuated traffic signal with pedestrian indication on all four legs.

VOLUME:

Current traffic volumes have not been collected due to the pandemic. Using portable video cameras located at three intersections, data was collected for 7 days to study the possible impact with the closure of College Avenue from Clayton Street to Broad Street. The following is a summary:

- E. Clayton St. at College Ave.:
 - In the PM peak 6 to 8 vehicles in each lane for 3 to 4 signal cycles was observed. The AM and Noon peak times did not show more than 4 to 6 vehicles in each lane for 1 to 2 cycles. All intersections cleared on every cycle.
- E. Clayton St. at N. Thomas St.:
 - In the PM peak 8 to 10 vehicles in each lane for 3 to 4 signal cycles were observe. The AM and Noon peak times did not show more than 6 to 8 vehicles in each lane for 1 to 2 cycles. All intersections cleared on every cycle.
- College Ave. at E. Clayton St.:
 - In the PM peak 4 vehicles waiting for 3 to 4 signal cycles were observed. The AM and Noon peak times did not show more than 2 to 3 vehicles in each lane for 1 to 2 cycles. All intersections cleared on every cycle.

There are several times of the day when the traffic has cleared with several seconds of signal timing left for the signals that are not actuated. At Thomas Street and Clayton Street the signal is actuated and often provides additional time for Thomas Street Traffic.

All intersections showed significant traffic from about 8:00 PM to about 1:00 AM on Friday and Saturday night, this is consistent with normal traffic for those times on the weekend.

PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY:

The history of the downtown pedestrian activity illustrates that the volumes are typically heaviest during the school year.

CONCLUSION:

There does not appear to be an impact to the downtown traffic circulation with closing of College Avenue at Clayton Street. The existing signal timing and programing clears the downtown traffic every cycle and addresses pedestrian crossing needs. The existing downtown signals are coordinated with AM and PM timing plans. As well, these intersections are monitored through the Traffic Engineering Traffic Control Center where the signal programing can be modified as needed. The downtown signal programs have been adjusted in the past due to the traffic needs for events, etc.

RECOMMENDATION:

From a traffic movement perspective the closing of College Avenue from Clayton Street to Broad Street does not have a major impact on the downtown traffic circulation. In fact, it has a positive impact on the movement on Broad Street and increased safety for the vast amount of pedestrians crossing Broad Street.

As the pandemic lessens and downtown traffic increases, Traffic Engineering has the ability, if needed, to collect traffic volumes and make programing/timing modifications to address traffic circulation and safety needs.

From a traffic movement perspective Transportation and Public Works supports the closure of College Avenue from Clayton Street to Broad Street.

PREPARED AND RECOMMENDED BY: SD Date: 2/25/2021
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Tim Griffith
Traffic Engineer

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