



MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 14, 2021
FROM: Salida City Staff
TO: Mayor PT Wood & City Council
SUBJECT: F Street Plaza Follow-Up (Updated)

Background

At the last regular meeting of the City Council, the Council heard testimony from three business owners requesting additional street closure in a half-block area of F Street between 2nd and 3rd Streets. At that time, the planned closure areas did not include this area and the Council requested additional analysis from staff on this matter. The Council also approved Resolution 2021-14 on May 4th, 2021, which provides for the Mayor and City Administrator to facilitate the outdoor expansion of businesses for outdoor dining (along with other purposes) related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Analysis

City staff looked at multiple options for additional street closures in conjunction with the Salida Business Alliance, restaurants, and other businesses. Staff's primary concern in this matter was to provide opportunity for restaurant expansion to the greatest extent possible while maintaining a safe and easily-navigated downtown area. Other considerations included ADA access, eliminating the smallest amount of parking possible, access to businesses that require turning movements onto the street, and fire/public safety access. Staffers involved in this discussion included the Public Works Director, Community Development Director, Fire Chief, City Clerk, and the City Administrator.

The physical conditions that exist on F Street between 2nd Street and 3rd Street do not support closure of either the full street or only half the street (to the mid-block alley). There are two businesses close to 3rd Street (Moonlight Pizza and Mike's Garage) that need driving access onto F Street for vehicles that are parking on their property. There is also a handicapped space directly in front of Fun Street Arcade that is ideal to remain available to downtown visitors. If half the street was closed, there is no logical turnaround mid-block for vehicles that would travel down the street, stranding larger vehicles (trucks) along with drivers unfamiliar with the area. Utilizing the alley for through traffic is ill-advised, as these alleys generally cannot accommodate two-way travel, and there are multiple new residences in the alley between F and G Streets (virtually assuring complaints from those residents). Simply put, alleys are not streets. It is staff's belief that the sum of these constraints are too great to justify the closure of half the street.

Staff also looked at 2018-2019-2020 sales tax results for retail businesses in this block of F Street (excluding Natural Grocers and Moonlight Pizza, as they are accessed separately off of 2nd and 3rd Streets). This is a limited sample size, as there are a number of non-retail businesses (yoga studio, two real estate offices, two physical therapy offices) that also exist on this block. In sum, retail

businesses were down -1.51% in 2020 over 2019. The decline can be attributed to one business that suffered losses over the prior year in excess of -50%; however, this can be attributed to other similar businesses opening in downtown Salida in 2020. Other retailers on this block were up between 14% and 25% over 2019, which is near or above the average retail increase that was seen across the City in 2020 despite the pandemic. Also, some parking turnover did not occur in 2020 due to not enforcing 2-hour parking in Salida, possibly impacting the ability to have more visitors in certain areas of downtown.

Following the last City Council meeting, staff attended the Salida Business Alliance meeting on May 20th. The membership identified a number of options to support businesses that are not in the two-block plaza area that appeared to gain support. These items include:

- Feather Flags for Businesses – possibly utilizing a color-coordinated system to identify business type and identifying which ones are open.
- ~~Welcome to Salida Over-Street Banner Between 2nd and 3rd Streets – a tensioning system apparently already exists in this area and a banner can hopefully be deployed somewhat easily~~
(The building owner no longer desires to participate in the overhead banner)
- Friday Night Hours Extension – creating a grant program for businesses that stay open additional hours on Fridays between June and August (between 5:00 and 7:00 in the evening) to offset employee and O&M costs for being open during times in which restaurants are drawing more people downtown.
- Planters instead of Barricades – this has already been deployed throughout downtown, including new planters with flowers that are located between 2nd and 3rd Streets.

Recommendation

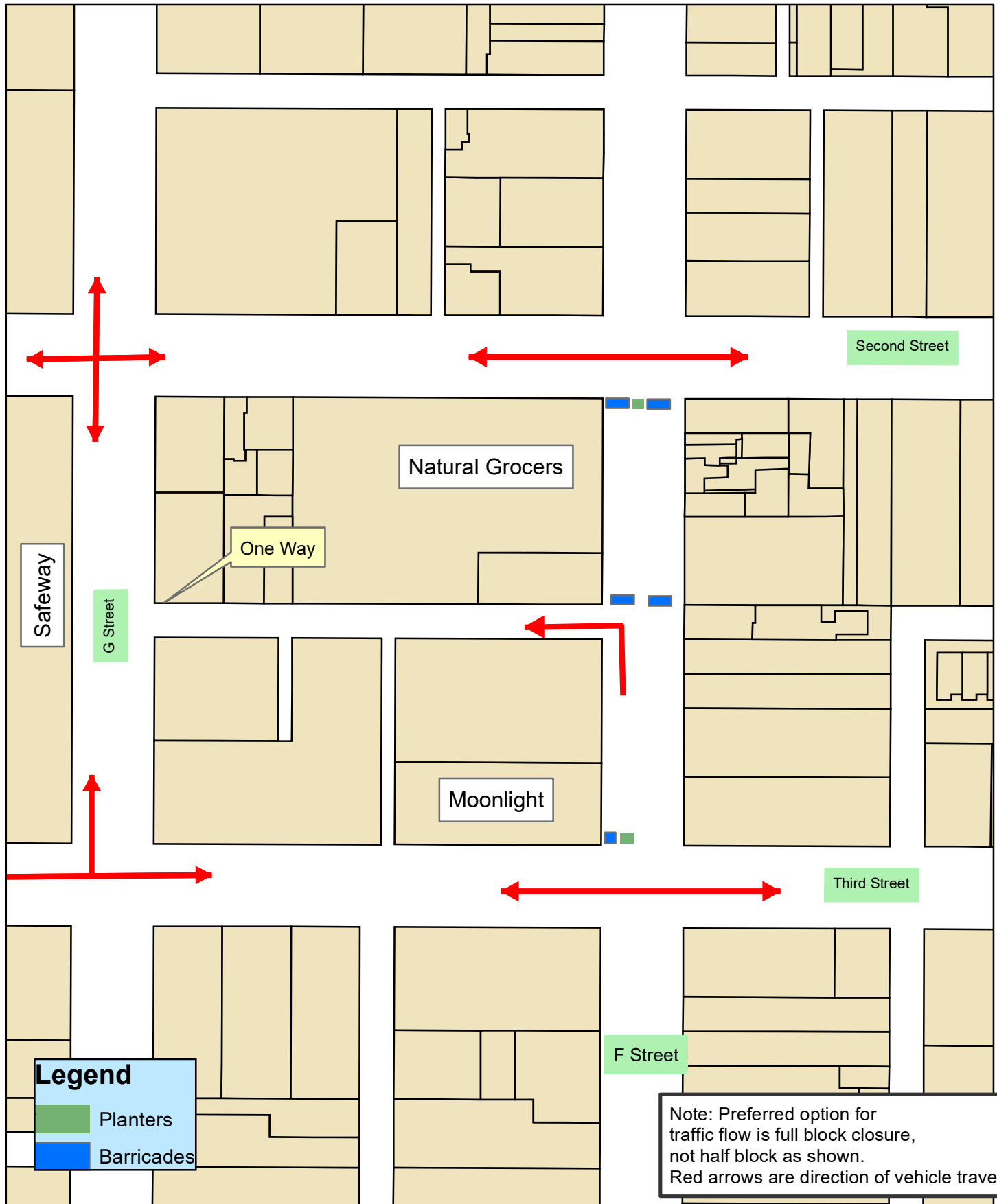
Staff recommends that time be provided to see where improvements can be made as noted above along with visitation numbers for the early summer months. Staff will continue to work with retailers, restaurants, and industry members throughout the summer to solve as many perceived issues as possible. Staff will also monitor any safety and parking issues that may crop up, in conjunction with renewed parking time enforcement in 2021.

-Update-



In reading the City Council's reaction to the brief discussion on June 1, it is clear that it is desired by policymakers for half the street to be closed to vehicular traffic. Staff does not believe this to be an ideal condition; however, this matter has already consumed more staff and Council bandwidth than is worth fighting over. Staff will work to close half the street on a trial basis for the month of July, with an attempt to implement the partial closure the week prior to the 4th of July (hopefully starting on June 28th). Please see the attached map for a detailed description of the closure.

F Street Pedestrian Mall

1/2 block closure from 2nd to 3rd



Legend

-  Planters
-  Barricades

Note: Preferred option for traffic flow is full block closure, not half block as shown. Red arrows are direction of vehicle travel.