



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMO

DEPARTMENT	PRESENTED BY	DATE
Administration	Christy Doon - City Administrator	March 31, 2025

AGENDA ITEM

F Street Summer Discussion

BACKGROUND

For 4 out of the last 5 years, the City has turned a portion of F Street downtown into a pedestrian mall/plaza during the summertime, closing it to vehicular traffic (the street remained open to vehicles in summer 2024). Council has stated that they would like to provide the public and downtown businesses with a conclusive answer as to the status for the street going into the summer of 2025, especially in light of a streetscape improvement project between 2nd and 3rd Streets from F to G, which is anticipated to continue through part of the summer. This project will include the installation of new crosswalks, ADA-compliant ramps, upgraded landscaping, bike parking, and other pedestrian-friendly enhancements. The work will also include paving improvements and water service line replacements adjacent to the affected intersections.

The closure question has proven to be a complicated one. Past feedback suggests that the public is fairly divided as to whether the street should be open or closed during the summer months. Some of the issues that proponents for closing the street cite include: added pedestrian safety during the busy summer months; the communal character and feel of a central pedestrian-only area; and the ability for businesses to expand their seating capacities and offerings. Some of the issues that opponents to closing the street cite include: the ability for seniors and those with disabilities to access specific businesses; the ability to continue conducting parades down F Street; and the reduced number of available parking spaces.

The current construction at 2nd and F is anticipated to be completed approximately May 1st which, if Council chooses to close F Street to vehicles for the summer, could allow businesses between Sackett and 2nd to expand into a portion of the right-of-way beginning that day (in the past, businesses were able to expand just prior to Memorial Day). Due to the construction schedule for the intersection at 3rd and F, however, the area between 2nd and 3rd will be needed for storing construction vehicles and materials until the rest of the project is completed in early June. Therefore, if Council wanted to extend a closure beyond 2nd Street, those businesses would likely not be able to expand into the right-of-way until that time.

Another consideration for any potential closure is the amount of area that would be allowed for business expansion. In the past, businesses were permitted to expand up to 13 feet beyond the



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curb on both sides of the street, ensuring that there was a minimum of 10 feet of clearance in the middle of the road for pedestrians and emergency vehicle access. While this 10 feet clearance would be sufficient passage for “walking” parades, it would not provide safe passage for flatbed trailers, large floats, and other vehicles that may be part of other parades that have traditionally used F Street during the summer (e.g. Memorial Day, FIBARK, and July 4th). Salida Fire recommends a minimum of 20 feet of clearance for such vehicular parades (including up to 10 feet for the vehicle width plus 5 feet on either side for spectators and pedestrian participants). This would limit the allowable expansion of seasonally permanent furniture to the width of the parking spaces along the curb, which are only 8-9 feet wide (there could potentially be an additional 5 feet available for furniture such as seats and tables that could be easily moved for vehicular parades). Staff has also discussed the feasibility for such parades to be directed to other streets such as Sackett Ave during the summer months and determined that may also be an option. Lastly, it should also be noted that a significant portion of F Street between Sackett and 1st Streets will be used for the FIBArk carnival, which will likely require that some or all the expansions in that stretch be removed during the festival.

REQUESTED DIRECTION FROM COUNCIL

1. Does Council want a portion of F Street downtown closed to vehicles this summer? Yes/No?

If Yes...

- Staff would recommend that businesses from Sackett to 2nd be allowed to expand beginning May 1st. Would that be acceptable to Council?
- Does Council also want to close the portion of F Street between 2nd and 3rd Streets? (Due to the need for construction staging in that area, expansion would only be available to businesses there after the 3rd Street intersection is complete—anticipated early June).
- Does Council want to limit the expansion space of semi-permanent street furniture to 8 feet (i.e. the width of a parking space) plus potential for an additional 5 feet of easily removed seating so as to allow for safe passage of parades with larger floats and vehicles OR would Council prefer to allow semi-permanent street furniture up to 13 feet from the curb and therefore require that parades with larger floats and vehicles be relocated (such as Sackett Ave) during the months of the closure. (Due to the



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intended location of the FIBArk carnival, some or all of the expansions between Sackett and 1st would need to be removed during the festival regardless).

- d. Is there anything else that Council would like to see to enhance the pedestrian mall/plaza experience and make it a success?
- e. What date would Council want such a closure to end? In the past, the closed portion of F Street has been reopened to vehicles sometime after Labor Day (as late as the final weekend of September). If Council decides to re-create the pedestrian mall/plaza, staff recommends a similar timeframe for reopening.

If No...

- a. Does Council have any other suggestions/alternative ideas or shall F Street remain status quo?