



TOWN COUNCIL

WORKSHOP AGENDA DOCUMENTATION

PREPARATION DATE: April 12, 2018
MEETING DATE: April 16, 2018

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT: Public Works
DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR: Larry Pardee
PRESENTER: Larry Pardee and Brian Schilling

SUBJECT: Town Square Pedestrian Zone Pilot Project

PURPOSE OF WORKSHOP ITEM

The purpose is to seek Town Council input and direction on a temporary Town Square Pedestrian Zone Pilot Project for summer 2018.

DESIRED OUTCOME

The desired outcomes would be for Town Council to approve moving forward on the Pilot Project; to direct staff to develop recommendations for dates, appropriate locations, and amenities to be offered in and around the Town Square; and to direct staff to utilize outside resources, consultants, and local groups that specialize in placemaking in developing the Pilot Project.

BACKGROUND/ALTERNATIVES

Background:

During the February 2018 Town Council Retreat, the Council and staff briefly discussed the concept of doing a Pedestrian Zone Pilot Project in the vicinity of the Town Square for a limited time in the summer of 2018, and recommended that the item be placed on a Town Council workshop. The general purpose of doing a pilot project is to test out ideas that have the potential to enhance the Town Square and downtown retail shopping district in ways consistent with the vision and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. The Comp Plan notes existing and future desired characteristics for the Town Square (from 2012 Comprehensive Plan – Illustration of Our Vision):

- District 1 – Town Square
 - ...is the historic center of Jackson Hole and the central gathering space for residents and visitors alike...and plays an important role in defining our community's western heritage and overall community identity.
 - Future goals:
 - ...have *visitors and residents visit the area more often and stay longer*, increasing the vitality of the area and supporting the local economy.
 - ...create *great public spaces and amenities* for residents and visitors alike.
 - ...create a positive visitor experience that supports our local economy [and] continues the tradition of the Town Square as the gathering place for our community.
 - ...host a variety of events and community celebrations for residents and visitors.
 - ...encourage the *temporary closure of streets*, parking lots, parks and other public spaces to support such events.
 - ...the community should consider the *temporary and permanent closure of some streets to vehicles in order to create a vibrant pedestrian environment*.

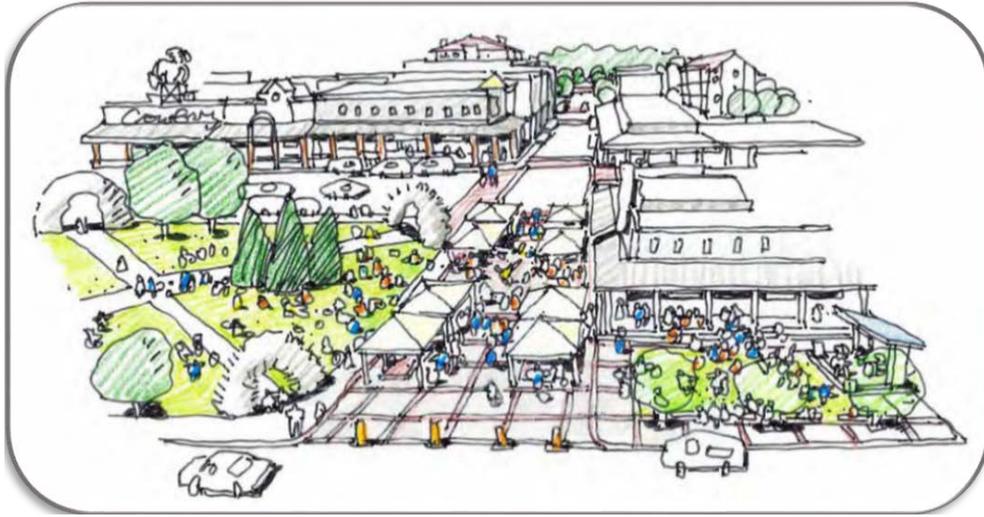


Figure 1. Town Square - 2012 Comprehensive Plan – Illustration of Our Vision

The principles and goals articulated in the Comp Plan for the Town Square can be broadly grouped under the concept of “placemaking,” which describes the collaborative process of collectively reimagining and activating public spaces for people and shaping the public realm in order to maximize shared value. Placemaking may ultimately involve changes in the design of a place, but really is about crafting a cohesive, shared vision for a public space and then translating that vision into a plan and program of uses.

Rather than deriving from a top-down, project-based approach, the placemaking process focuses on “observing, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work, and play in a particular space in order to understand their needs and aspirations for that space and for their community as a whole,” with the goal of creating a common vision for that place. The vision can evolve quickly into an implementation strategy, beginning with small-scale, often temporary improvements (pilot projects) that bring immediate benefits both to the spaces themselves and the people who use them. (Background materials on placemaking referenced from the Project for Public Spaces website and related articles).

Community engagement is key to a successful placemaking effort, and that is especially true when applied to place that is as important to the community as the Town Square. An effective placemaking process will identify and reach out to community stakeholders, spend time on-site, evaluate the space, and use this information to create a vision for the place. As noted in the Comp Plan (Policy 4.2.e):

Town Square is Jackson’s major tourism draw and can be described as the “heart of the heart.” As such, it is the area that evokes the greatest amount of sentiment and concern regarding architecture, scale and character...a variety of tools will be used to encourage and enhance pedestrian amenities to ensure this district remains the hub of the visitor experience and center of community life into the future.

Initial implementation does not, and should not, need to be in the form of permanent changes. Instead, implementation should begin with a “lighter, quicker, cheaper” (LQC) approach that allows for short-term experiments to test out simple, low-cost solutions and continues with ongoing evaluation of what has been done. LQC provides the ability to create and test a project immediately and with direct community involvement. Initial projects are often temporary, inexpensive alterations to a public space that take place while more long-range projects develop over time. The long-term success of a space depends on continued observation and analysis.

This LQC approach is precisely what is envisioned with the Pilot Project for the Town Square—as a test of some possible ideas that could showcase the potential for how the Town Square can function while increasing its economic vitality and shared value as a public space.

Proposed Alternatives:

The initial discussion for a Pilot Project has included a partial or complete pedestrian zone on the north and/or east sides of Town Square for a one- to two-week period in July or August. With Council approval to move forward on Pilot Project planning, staff will explore specifics for project location, timing, duration, amenities, and funding opportunities, and will bring recommendations back to the Council. Staff will also conduct preliminary stakeholder outreach and explore economic and other project benefits to report back to Council.

The Comprehensive Plan speaks extensively about improving the walkability of downtown streets and public spaces and the importance of pedestrian activity and community events for the continued success of the downtown retail shopping district. From Section 4 – *Town as the Heart of the Region*:

- **Policy 4.2.c – Create vibrant walkable mixed use subareas:** “The primary objective in downtown Jackson will be to enhance pedestrian amenities and connectivity to support a vibrant and walkable downtown core. To achieve this goal, Town will encourage public gathering places in both public and private developments in the downtown area. Public spaces within these subareas may take the form of parks, streetscape amenities and/or public/semi-public spaces provided by private property owners.”
- **Policy 4.4.a – Maintain and improve public spaces:** “Jackson’s public spaces and civic facilities should be interesting and memorable, and should reinforce our sense of community. The integration of fine arts professionals in the design of public spaces will be encouraged to create unique and visually engaging projects.”
- **Policy 4.4.c – Continue traditions and community events:** “The community will continue to sponsor and support community events in downtown Jackson that celebrate the character of the region and provide a strong sense of community for local residents. Year round community activities and cultural events will be encouraged to utilize the downtown to foster resident and visitor interaction.”

Alternatives:

- **Pilot Project Test**
 - *Concept:* Short term, low-cost repurposing of public streets around the Town Square to pedestrian-only (or pedestrian-priority) areas in order to test strategies that will enhance the public’s experience in downtown. Test strategies include providing an improved pedestrian environment that facilitates **access** to local businesses, a range of **activities** to engage people and encourage them to stay longer, and **amenities** such as seating to create spaces for people to interact and participate in community events.
 - *Permitting:* The Town may wish to handle this Pilot Project through a Special Event permit. Staff will work with the Planning Department and Town Administration as needed.
 - *Location:* North and east sides of the Town Square (Deloney and Center streets), similar to the Farmers’ Market. Other locations have not been proposed thus far.
 - *Closure:* Full (streets are blocked off completely to vehicles) or partial (streets allow vehicles at very low speeds, but are heavily prioritized to pedestrian use). A “full” closure would still provide for emergency access and special deliveries or other access. Would involve placing temporary barriers at the ends of streets to control vehicular access.
 - *Timing:* July or August. Staff likely to recommend August to allow additional lead time for planning and outreach.
 - *Duration:* One to two weeks. Likely recommendation of a minimum of a 9-day period starting on a Saturday and running to the following Sunday in order to allow for two Farmers’ Markets and sufficient time to get an impression of how a full or partial closure might work and to collect data and feedback from stakeholders.
 - *Amenities:* Temporary installations that provide places for people to sit, eat, socialize, and enjoy the public space. Could include:

- Picnic tables
- Café tables and chairs
- Planters with flowers, shrubs, small trees
- Public art
- Bike racks, parklets
- Food trucks and/or tents
- Little library
- *Activities:* Create uses that keep people engaged, interactive, and eager to spend time and return to the area. Possibilities include:
 - Music entertainment (both informal and scheduled performances)
 - Entertainment for kids (and adults) such as face painting
 - Games
 - Farmer’s and/or People’s Market
 - Dance, plays, or other performances
 - Arts and crafts activities
 - Senior activities
 - Shootout
- **No action/status quo** – Do not proceed with the Pilot Project. Streets will operate as they do currently with no temporary changes in activities or use.
- **Other?**

In order to implement this Pilot Project, staff recommends collaborating with local groups such as the Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce, Jackson Hole Public Art (who have experience coordinating events and imaginative re-uses of the public space surrounding the Town Square), and perhaps seeking assistance from professional firms that specialize in placemaking. This would be extremely beneficial and contribute to the project’s success in that staff’s capacity to execute the project in the busy summer season may be challenged, and including partners to assist with planning and implementation would help greatly. Additionally, by using external resources and consulting with people and/or groups that have experience with projects like these, that will help us make good choices about what to include in the Pilot Project and conduct an effective stakeholder process and evaluation of what was successful. Specialists in this field will be in town to attend the Wyoming Bike/Walk Summit in mid-May and this could be a good opportunity to engage some of these resources.

[ALIGNMENT WITH COUNCIL’S STRATEGIC INTENT](#)

References to Comp Plan policies and strategies noted above. The project is relevant to and consistent with the Town’s economic and “Town as Heart” policies.

[STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS](#)

The stakeholder outreach process has not officially started. Preliminary analysis includes Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, local advocacy groups, and other interested parties yet to fully be defined. As mentioned above, stakeholder involvement to craft a shared vision is one of the cornerstones of a successful placemaking effort.

[FISCAL IMPACT](#)

Fiscal impacts will vary based on the extent and duration of amenities and activities scheduled for the Pilot Project. As part of the project planning, staff will develop cost estimates for each of the possible items and will also look for grant/partnership opportunities to help fund amenities and activities.

STAFF IMPACT

Impacts will vary depending on what is implemented and the extent of outreach that is done. Staff will actively look for partnerships with stakeholders and outside resources to help plan and execute the project. In any scenario, a week-long closure that includes multiple events, setup/disassembly, public outreach and information gathering, and would require involvement from the Town Public Works Department, Streets Crew, Pathways Coordinator, and Town Administration staff (Carl Pelletier).

LEGAL ISSUES

We are not aware of any legal issues at this time, but exploring that will be part of the outreach process.

ATTACHMENTS

None.