

STAFF REPORT

DATE: January 17, 2023

TO: City Council

FROM: Dianna Jensen, Acting Director of Public Works – Engineering & Transportation/City Engineer
Ryan D. Chapman, Assistant Director of Public Works – Engineering & Transportation/Traffic Engineer

SUBJECT: Continued Closure of G Street

Recommendation

1. Provide staff direction on which of the presented options relating to the current closure of G Street should be considered further; and
2. Approve the additional wayfinding signing and striping directing traffic through the South G Parking lot as shown in Attachment 2.

Fiscal Impact

Based on the alternative that is ultimately selected, the costs of any changes would vary considerably. Reconfiguring the road into space for other uses on a more permanent basis (Options 2 and 4) is likely to be more costly than Options 1 and 3 to implement. These costs would be at least partially borne by the City. An ongoing funding source for long term maintenance costs would also need to be established. Depending on the direction provided by Council, staff would return to Council with detailed plans and estimated costs at a future meeting.

The costs to complete the proposed wayfinding are estimated to be less than \$5000 and are available in the current budget.

Council Goal(s)

Goal 5 - Enhance a Vibrant Downtown and Thriving Neighborhoods

Commission Input

This issue was presented to the Bicycling, Transportation and Street Safety Commission (BTSSC) at their January 12, 2023 meeting for public input and the BTSSC voted to support keeping the road closed to automobile traffic (option 2) with the desire to explore creating common areas along the street where people can gather outside of the dining areas that are maintained by others and assuring ADA accessibility and parking.

Background & Analysis

The closure of G Street and use of downtown parking spaces and sidewalks for outdoor dining was initiated as a collaborative “Open Air Davis” pandemic response effort to promptly assist businesses with challenges presented by COVID-19 restrictions and

public health protocols. Expedited, no cost, temporary use permits for outdoor dining were approved through the City's Emergency Operation Center to enable businesses to operate outdoors. These temporary outdoor uses enabled businesses to continue to operate under emergency conditions and greatly contributed to the survival of many businesses that would have potentially faced closure. In addition to providing a space for businesses to serve their customers in a way that was compliant with COVID-19 restrictions, the Open-Air Davis concept provided an opportunity to examine some of the benefits, challenges, and provide fodder for ideas around creative solutions that could further enhance a more pedestrian friendly shopping and outdoor dining experience in the downtown.

After the initial "state reopening" that occurred in June of 2021 when many of the business restrictions were lifted, having outdoor space for dining was still considered important as behavioral change is often slow and many customers were (and perhaps still are) hesitant to dine indoors. Though Temporary Use Permits (TUPs) and the G Street closure have continued, the City scaled back some of the space by reopening the E Street plaza parking lot area. In summer discussions with Downtown Davis Business Association (DDBA) staff, there was general agreement to revisit the need for the space at the end of August of 2021. Accordingly, staff met with DDBA in mid-August to discuss elements of a proposed plan to improve downtown aesthetics and concerns about G Street and TUP's.

In November of 2021 the City Council heard an item regarding the G Street closure that considered several alternatives and while no formal action was taken by the Council based on this discussion G Street remained closed and the temporary barriers that were blocking the road were replaced with removable bollards and planters.

Since that time staff has reached out to the businesses fronting G Street as well as other stakeholders such as the DDBA and Chamber of Commerce to solicit further input on the closure. To help lead the discussion staff provided 4 conceptual and high level alternatives for consideration, these are (in no particular order of preference):

- **Option 1:** Re-open the street to automobile traffic. This would restore the street to what existed prior to the closure in 2020 and include two travel lanes and angled parking.

This would be the simplest option to implement. The existing TUP's would expire and the outdoor dining materials be removed. Staff would evaluate the road and assure that all of the missing or worn signage and striping would be replaced and the bollards removed.

- **Option 2:** Keep the road closed to traffic for outdoor dining and other uses, however with detailed protocols for businesses and the City in terms of physical improvements, maintenance, attractiveness and responsibilities.

This would include developing a set of standards for the outdoor retail and dining areas (consistency of design of outdoor furnishings, lighting, planters, etc), as

well as identifying responsibilities for maintenance of the areas, such as who would be removing litter and performing regular sweeping and watering. There would also be a need to identify funding responsibilities for the outdoor areas and if there would be a fee associated with the outdoor dining areas.

The attached G Street Downtown Davis Ideas for Open Street Beautification, and Public Activation report identifies treatments that have been used for similar road closures throughout the Country. In addition, there might be grant funding to assist in the implementation of more permanent changes such as removal of gutters or the installation of at grade planters and other low impact storm control solutions but it would take several years to secure funding and construct a project using these sources. Alternatively, the City Council could direct utilization of alternative sources, such as American Rescue Plan Act funds (potentially including those already allocated for Downtown enhancements).

- **Option 3:** Re-open the road, but allow for closures for special events or certain times of the week. This would include moveable bollards to keep motorized traffic off of the street when it is closed. A detailed procedure would have to be developed to identify what entities could close the road and how many times a year it would be closed.

This would allow for the road to be closed during the times where the outdoor areas are used the most but the street furniture would need to be temporary so that it can be easily removed and stored. A better understanding on who would set up the outdoor areas and where the furniture would be stored would be needed.

- **Option 4:** Re-open the northbound road vehicle lane only and close the southbound lane, so that this portion becomes a one-way street with parallel parking. The closed part of the road could be used for outdoor dining and other uses.

This alternative would allow for the restoration of some automobile access and parking along G Street but additional discussion of what road features would be desired is needed. For example, should a south bound bicycle lane or parking on both sides of the street be added.

There might be grant funding to assist in the implementation of more permanent changes such as the relocation of gutters and the widening of sidewalks but it would take several years to secure funding and construct a project using these sources. Again, the City Council could direct the utilization of other more immediate fund sources, such as ARP noted above.

Based on the feedback that has been received so far there is no single option that is broadly supported by the community. However, there are four areas of concern that have been consistently raised with the current state of the closure; these issues relate to the appearance and cleanliness of the dining areas and the equitability to all of the businesses along G Street.

The first concern is the perception that the program was put in place without clear standards for the appearance of the area leading to some of the outdoor dining areas using materials that are less attractive or are not as well-kept as others. These concerns could be addressed with the development of requirements for both the appearance of the dining spaces and how they are maintained.

The second concern is that this portion of G Street is not kept clean and frequently there is trash found in the area and no clear responsibility about who cleans the area. This concern could be addressed with the development of requirements identifying who is responsible to clean the area and standards for cleanliness.

The third concern is that the current approach to issuing TUP's has led some businesses disproportionately benefiting from increased dining space with little or no additional cost, while potentially negatively affecting others along G Street. This has been expressed as businesses being able to essentially rent the public space for little or no cost, thereby receiving a financial benefit. To address this concern a TUP fee schedule could be developed for those who directly benefit, or options for well-designed outdoor merchandise display could be developed to help level the playing field of benefit to those other than food service establishments.

The fourth concern is that the closure and associated TUP's makes it difficult for customers to access some of the businesses on the street. This could potentially be addressed by developing requirements for well-marked walkways and bicycle access through G Street, and through tastefully designed wayfinding signs.

Finally, a concern was raised the portion of G Street just south of the closure. The issue is that cars using the parking between 2nd and the bollards try to turn around on the street to get out or access the parking on the west side of the street. This results in vehicles making multi-point turns blocking access to the South G Parking Lot. As an interim solution staff is recommending wayfinding signage and pavement arrows to direct traffic through the parking lot and out onto H Street as shown in Attachment 2. This is a relatively low-cost solution and could be implemented by city crews immediately as specific plans for other option(s) are developed.

Conclusion

At this time staff is seeking general direction from the City Council on what alternative(s) should be pursued further. This further consideration would include developing preliminary cost estimates and street lay-outs and specific design criteria and responsibilities. It would also include additional outreach with the various stakeholders to solicit feedback and gauge levels of support for the selected options. Staff would then return to the City Council with a specific, detailed plan, implementation schedule, and budget proposal for Council consideration and action.

Attachments

1. G Street Downtown Davis Ideas for Open Street Beautification, and Public Activation
2. South G Street Parking Lot striping

G Street-Downtown Davis

Ideas for Open Street Beautification, and Public Activation

SUCCESSFUL LIGHTING & OUTDOOR BUSINESS STRUCTURE EXAMPLES



Winters: uniformity in temporary structures, lighting, seating, signage, barrels as post anchors for market lighting





Santa Monica: Clean, elegant lighting, live music, ample bench seating





Increased market lighting over walkways helping safety and sense of joy



Indoor-style lighting outdoors with living wall concept and café seating



Cement-filled half barrels as temporary post stabilization



Santa Monica: Clean, elegant lighting, live music, ample bench seating



Santa Barbara: temporary, simple, aesthetically pleasing fencing

SUCCESSFUL OUTDOOR SEATING



Carmel: bright plantings in space-defining wood planters with heaters and umbrellas



Winters' uniform umbrellas, potted plants, and comfortable outdoor seating that inspires gathering









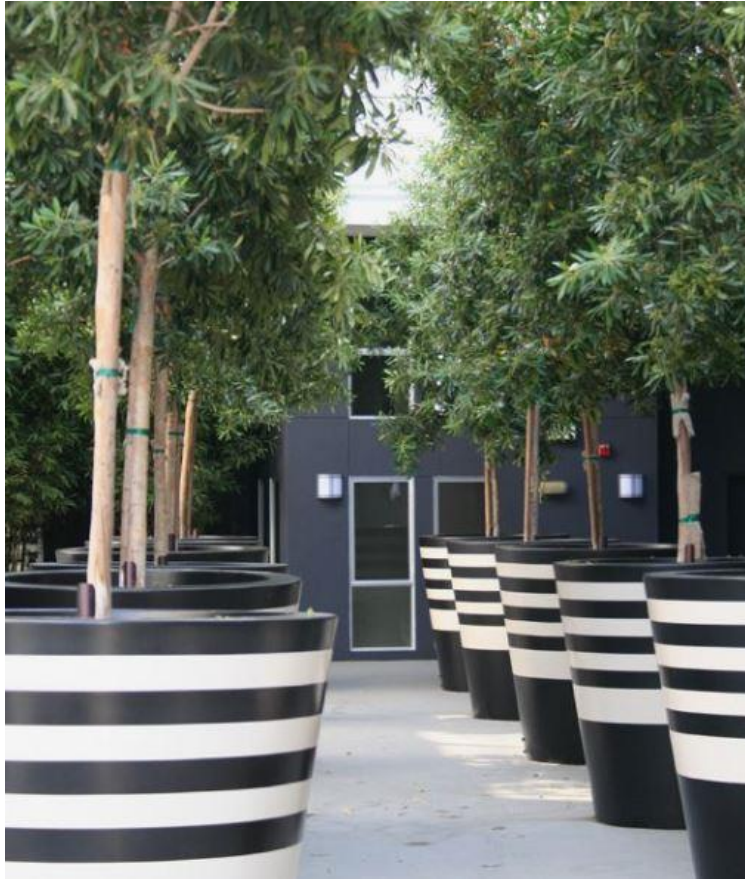
POTTED TREES/PLANTERS AS BARRIERS & BEAUTIFICATION



"Walking Forest"- a pop-up forest applied to pedestrian street



Elegant potted trees with upward lighting



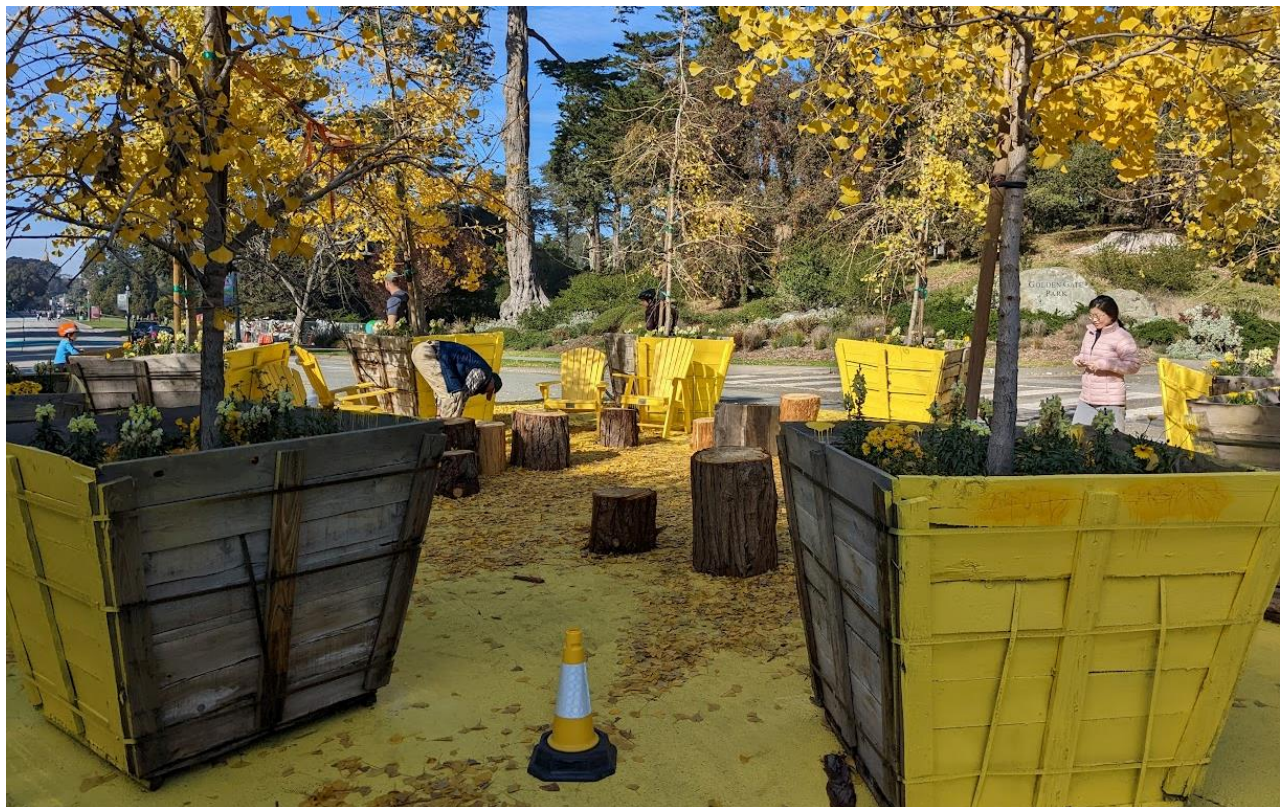
Potted trees, where the planters make a visual impact while also providing barriers



Giant flower pot concept



Visually Impactful Potted Tree Barrier



San Francisco's JKF Avenue—simple and easy to implement mature trees in planters, monochrome approach to design.



Concrete Planter Barrier/Beautification



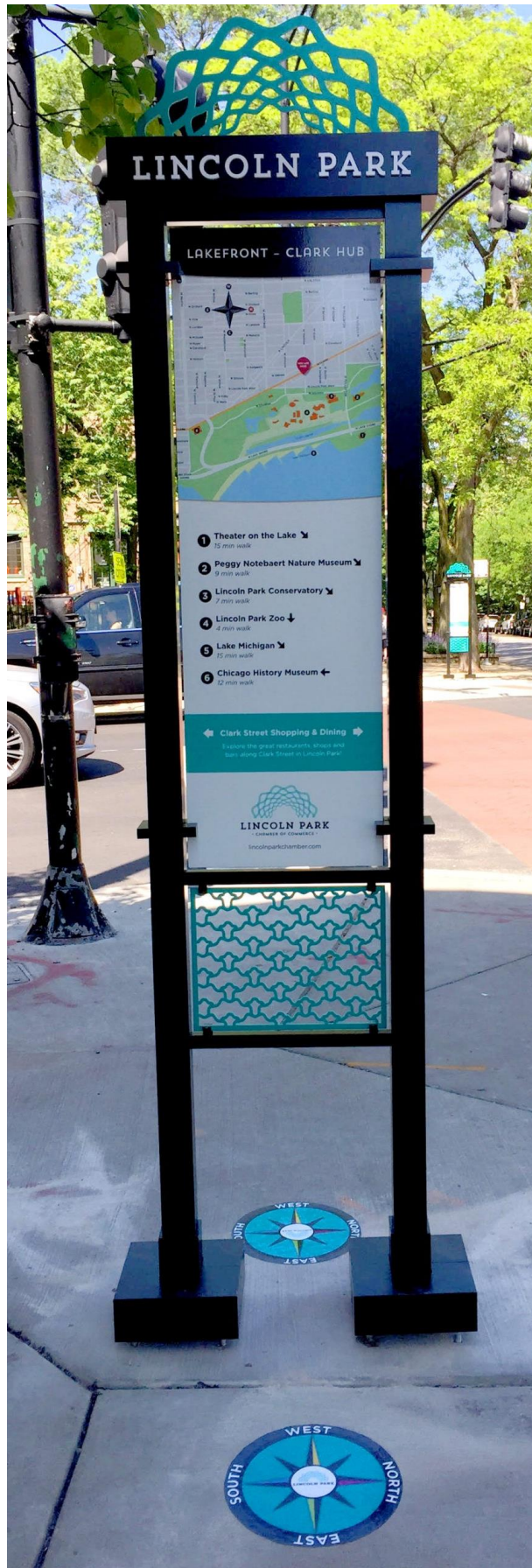
Mobile, modular planter barriers--Rolling Planter Source: www.rollingplanter.com

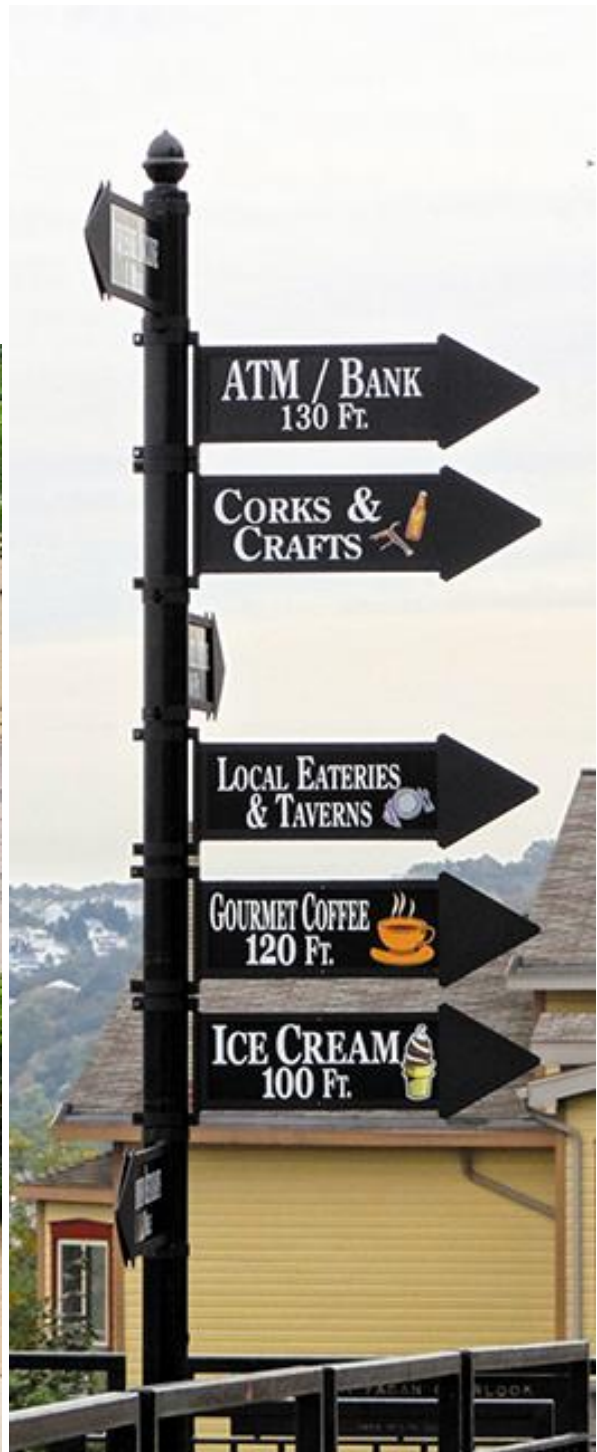
SIGNAGE/WAYFINDING SUPPORTING BUSINESSES ON THE BLOCK











STREET MURAL TREATMENTS

[Follow the Data Podcast: Making Streets Safer with Asphalt Art:](#) art as an effective and relatively low-cost strategy to activate streets. Discussing *asphalt art*: visual interventions on **roadways** (intersections and crosswalks), **pedestrian spaces** (plazas and sidewalks).



G Street Before and After...



Space activating street mural example / public checkers & chess



Temporary Street Mural, "Water is Life", 2020 as seen from G St Plaza, in front of Woodstock's





Impact of simple color on pedestrian street, plus fun signage





Creative pavement painting bringing the inside out

STREET & NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVATION



Multiple examples from [Street Lab in NYC](#)





Activating the space with a pop-up library



Street Performer Examples: Performers of dance, children's entertainment, etc.



Small-scale live music, acoustic or amplified



Chalk-it-up events, chalk festivals, weekly/monthly temporary chalk murals



Public Engagement Dance Activation



Example of how bring-your-own-chair direction can make larger events possible

[Actions for Streets as Places: How Government Makes It Happen \(pps.org\)](https://pps.org/): Fantastic article summing up how to ACTIVATE street space with examples.

[100 Activations for NYC - Street Lab](#): Extremely robust street activation programming in NYC with lists of examples/ideas.

[Avenue 3 Miami Quick-Build Activation > Street Plans \(street-plans.com\)](https://street-plans.com/): Video of how Miami approached a project similar to G Street, adding color and a more pedestrian-centric design.

[City of Albuquerque Invites Neighborhoods to Help Activate City Parks \(cabq.gov\)](https://cabq.gov/): Community-led arts, culture, and educational programming in public parks, could also work on G Street.

[Community Garden Games](#): Australian company's games/play setups for all ages in public spaces.

WASTE MANAGEMENT



Bellingham, WA

NAVIGATION AND PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLCE FLOW

Winters: extended safe passage for pedestrians with dedicated sidewalk space for dining/placemaking. Notice integrated curb drainage.





Pavement Treatment to Accommodate Bikes on a mostly pedestrian block

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM COMMUNITY/STUDENT INPUT SESSIONS

G Street could benefit from enhancements to the following:

- **LIGHTING**
 - More and improved lighting, fixing existing streetlights, adding ambient market lights
- **STREET ACCESSORIES**
 - Tables, planters, potted trees and plantings, living and creative barriers
- **WASTE**
 - Improved trash clean-up system and regular street maintenance and cleaning
- **SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING**
 - Bringing awareness to businesses on the block, and assisting flow of people and bikes
- **COLOR**
 - Addition of street murals, decorative street vinyl application, umbrellas, etc.
- **CONSISTENCY**
 - Intentional uniformity in outdoor structures to create unified space design and brand
- **BEAUTIFICATION**
 - Better natural surroundings-planters with living foliage, décor, trees, etc.
 - Addition of temporary public art and/or decorative street furnishings
- **ACTIVATION**
 - Events and activities that ACTIVATE the street, especially targeting weekday hours
 - Shop small weekend, street MARKETS, pop-up craft fairs, pop-up art shows
 - Live MUSIC and PERFORMANCE, theatre, dance, circus, recreation activities, etc.
 - Design elements to promote PLAY- hopscotch, cornhole, giant jenga, chess

- FOOD truck roundup, Off the Grid, pop-up food stalls, fairs
- Public DANCE workshops, line dancing, dance parties, silent disco, flash mobs

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

****Great video on Miami street activation ****

<https://street-plans.com/news-post/project-page/avenue-3-miami-quick-build-activation/>

Pop-up Street Activations in NYC

<https://www.streetlab.org/initiatives/100-activations-for-nyc/>

Principles for the Living Street of Tomorrow

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

Bloomberg Philanthropies' Asphalt Art Initiative

<https://asphaltart.bloomberg.org/>

Follow the Data Podcast: Making Streets Safer with Asphalt Art

<https://asphaltart.bloomberg.org/>

Chicago City Council approves new Pedestrian Streets

<https://chicagoyimby.com/2022/01/city-council-approves-new-pedestrian-streets-in-west-loop.html>

***Lighting Use & Design*, Project for Public Spaces**

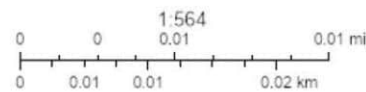
[Lighting Use & Design](#)

Downtown Park Lighting Transformation, Ontario

[Downtown Park Lighting Transformation](#)



Pavement Arrows G St & H St



Public Works
Engineering &
Transportation
www.cityofdavis.org