



City of Gainesville Agenda Report

File #: 2022-751

Agenda Date: December 1, 2022

Department: Sustainable Development

Title: Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan – Potential Capital Projects: Sweetwater Park (E University Ave to SE 4th Ave), Streatery (SW 1st Ave), and Festival Street (SE 1st Ave) 2022-751 (B)

Description: The adopted Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan indicated an immediate implementation priority being improvements to Sweetwater Park (a.k.a., Downtown Jewel), and its connection to the downtown via SE and SW 1st Avenue. Staff has conducted a review of potential next steps for implementation of the Sweetwater Park, Streatery, and Festival Street and is bringing forward recommendations for Commission consideration and direction.

Explanation:

On October 20, 2022, the City Commission adopted the Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan. The Plan incorporates an Implementation Matrix designating time horizons and details associated with each of the Plan's sixteen (16) Big Ideas.

Prior to October 20th adoption, the City Commission moved to create improved permanent pedestrian zones (Streatery) on SW 1st Ave between SW 2nd St and S Main St, explore Festival Street layouts for SE 1st Ave between S Main St and Sweetwater Park, and provide considerations for permanent pedestrian zone at NW 2nd St, on part of the block between W University Ave and NW 1st Ave.

In early November, City staff held a two and half (2 ½) day retreat focused on various pending items regarding the Downtown. Internal staff reviewed status and then received input from various downtown stakeholders invited to participate in the proceedings.

With respect to Sweetwater Park, the Streatery, and the Festival Street, Staff, the Design Team, and Stakeholders met on site to review existing conditions and held lively conversations about the potential of these areas. In today's meeting, Staff will report back on the key takeaways from the above mentioned sessions.

Strategic Connection:

Goal 3: A Great Place to Live and Experience

Fiscal Note:

Staff estimates approximately \$150,000 in cumulative cost for next steps for stakeholder engagement and design for the Sweetwater Park, Streatery, and Festival Street projects along with an additional \$50,000 for immediate improvements to the Streatery area on SW 1st Avenue.

Recommendation:

The City Commission: The City Commission: 1) hear a presentation; 2) direct staff to identify funding in the amount of \$200,000 to implement the steps outlined in the agenda item; 3) direct staff to present the Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan and identified recommendations/concepts to enhance the Sweetwater Park, the Streatery and Festival Street to community partners.