

06-03-2020 Town Council Meeting
Responses to Council Questions

ITEM #6: Consider Ordinance to Authorize the Town Manager to Permit Use of Public Sidewalks and Other Areas for Outdoor Retail and Restaurant Activity During the COVID-19 Pandemic State of Emergency

Council Question:

The ordinance is clearly designed so that it will not be in effect when UNC has reopened, and students are in town. What is the rationale for that? What are the downsides of having expanded outdoor dining with students present?

Staff Response:

The ordinance was written to end when traffic increased and the lanes were needed for vehicles as students move back to Chapel Hill. For the western section of Franklin Street it is possible to extend beyond the opening of UNC, at first with our temporary system and then with a more permanent system after resurfacing.

Council Question:

How does this relate to our plans to change the striping on West Franklin Street and would we need that restriping to help accommodate increased outdoor dining, e.g., by allowing pedestrian accommodations in the roadway?

Staff Response:

We do have plans approved by Council and under review by NCDOT to change one vehicular lane in each direction to bike lanes between Columbia and Merritt Mill. This was supposed to happen as part of NCDOT resurfacing this summer but the resurfacing has been delayed to summer 2021. The traffic analysis done for that project shows that the road would still maintain an acceptable level of service for vehicles with the proposed changes.