Streetscape entering next phase

BY GREG OLIVER
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CLEMSON — Now that the first phase of the city of Clemson's Streetscape project is complete, officials are looking ahead to the next phase that will begin in the spring.

During a recent Clemson City Council meeting, Clint Rigsby and Joe Bryant of Seamon Whiteside, the firm handling the project, said they have already been in contact with stakeholders, property owners and restaurant owners to work through details.

Last summer's initial phase, Phase IA, included North Clemson Avenue up to Wigington Street, Sloan Street and Earle Street up to McCollum Street. The phase included sidewalk improvements, landscaping, overhead utility relocation, on-street parking and decorative street lighting.

Rigsby said increased foot traffic was another positive result.

"The side streets of North Clemson Avenue and Sloan Street are now more walkable," Rigsby said. "Hopefully, business owners are pleased and feel that the improvements are driving people to their businesses."

Phase 1B will begin in May and will feature Keith Street, Earle Street and McCollum Street. Zone 2, from Keith Street to Tiger Boulevard, and Zone 3, consisting of the Calhoun district, will be conducted the following two summers.



FILE PHOTO

Clemson construction crews work on Phase 1A of the Streetscape project on Earle Street in downtown Clemson. The project, which began in May and will continue for three additional summers, also includes utility relocation, sidewalk improvements and parking.

Rigsby said Earle Street will feature pavers, Tiger stripes "with a little different character," and trees whose size depends on overhead power lines and whether they impact the visibility of businesses. Keith Street will consist of a two-way street all the way to where it has access with Finley. McCollum Street, presently a two-way street, will be converted to a one-way street and lead onto Earle Street.

Rigsby said the project also involves converting current perpendicular spaces to angled parking in order to improve pedestrian access. The spaces in front of the Hallmark store will be pushed back to provide more pedestrian space on the sidewalk but will be designated for customers only.

In addition, Rigsby said the brick wall in front of Raspberry Fizz will be removed and replaced by "a short, landscaped tree." He added that a more aesthetically pleasing "trash area" will consist of consolidating 12 trash cans into a specific location maintained by public works.

"There are several grading issues and challenges (regarding the next project)," Rigsby said. "Those challenges include the ability to cross and keep pedestrian traffic along the road. Pedestrians can walk all the way up Keith to Finley to Groucho's, which could be a placeholder for future arts."

Traffic control signage is something Rigsby said is another part of the project.

"We want to make sure people know how to cut back out to College Avenue," he said.

City Administrator Rick Cotton estimated the cost of the next phase at $660,000, including $160,000 in utility expenses.

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