

## City Council hears data on Morgan Square expanded dining area

TUESDAY, AUGUST 10

## City Hospitality Tax data shows restaurant sales growth downtown three times larger than citywide



At their meeting on Monday, Spartanburg City Council heard an overview of downtown data collected ahead of their expected decision later this month on whether to continue to closure of W Main Street in front of Morgan Square for expanded outdoor dining. City Manager Chris Story presented Council with an assortment of data showing increased City Hospitality Tax revenue, increased pedestrian activity, and cell phone carrier data showing increased downtown visits this spring and summer over the same time period in 2019, signs which point to a Downtown Spartanburg economy resurgent after weathering worst of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

According to the City Manager, mobile phone location data provided through a subscription to *placer.ai* shows 13.1 percent more visits to Downtown Spartanburg during May and June of this year than during the same time period in 2019. Coupled with that, pedestrian counters installed along sidewalks downtown outside the Morgan Square area also showed counts 17.25 percent higher May-July 2021 than the same time period in 2019.

Additionally, Story also shared Hospitality Tax data with Council showing a drastic increase in sales of 21.5 percent for downtown restaurants outside the Morgan Square area in April-June 2021 over April-June 2019. That growth is especially striking as it is nearly three times the Hospitality Tax growth seen throughout the rest of the city, 7.4 percent.

Along with sales and visitor data, Council also heard an overview of the City's recently released Morgan Square expanded outdoor dining public survey. Among the survey's 3,444 respondents, 55.24% favor keeping W Main Street closed to vehicle traffic indefinitely for expanded pedestrian use, 24.28% favor keeping W Main Street closed to vehicle traffic in front of the square on weekends (Friday-Sunday) for expanded pedestrian use and open to vehicle traffic on weekdays (Monday-Thursday), and 18.25% favor opening W Main Street in front of the square to vehicle traffic.