



ATHENS CITY COUNCIL CALLED MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 5:00pm

Athens Municipal Building
Burkett L. Witt Council Chambers

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. INVOCATION**
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. ROLL CALL**
- V. CITIZENS COMMENTS GERMANE TO THE AGENDA**
- VI. NEW BUSINESS**
 - a. Discuss and approve a project for the 2025 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application.**
 - b. Livestream**
- VII. ADJOURNMENT**



ATHENS CITY COUNCIL CALLED MEETING

Tuesday, February 4, 2025

Agenda Item

Applying for a 2025 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Overview

The application period to apply for a 2025 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) has opened and the city is eligible to apply. Previously completed city CDBG projects included sewer improvements through the Athens Utility Board. According to the attached Powerpoint presentation, national CDBG objectives are to benefit low and moderate income persons, elimination of slum and blight, and resolve immediate threat or urgent needs. Specifically, eligible grant categories include:

- Public health and safety
- Community infrastructure
- Community revitalization
- Sewer system rehabilitation
- Water system rehabilitation
- Water line extensions

Funding limits are \$420,000 for non-construction projects and \$1,000,000 for construction projects with a required city match around 9-12%. The application deadline is March 28, 2025 but many items must be completed prior to the application deadline such as conducting a public hearing (completed), procuring professional services, preparing an engineering/architectural report and cost estimates, and approving a resolution.

Possible city projects include constructing a new community center at Regional Park or elsewhere with indoor basketball courts for the basketball program among many other indoor and outdoor recreational amenities. A community center was one of the top five projects identified during the 2024 Strategic Summit.

Staci Willoughby of the Southeast Tennessee Development District attended the December 9, 2024 work session and conducted a quick review of the program, identified eligible projects, and answered questions.

Summary of the December 9, 2024 Work Session

Following discussion and council leaning toward infrastructure improvements, the consensus was to place this item on the December 17, 2024 consent agenda for approval.

Summary of the December 17, 2024 Regular Session

During this meeting, the Council approved to apply for this grant and authorized conducting a required public hearing on January 21, 2025 to obtain citizen comments regarding potential projects. The public hearing was conducted and those public hearing minutes are attached.

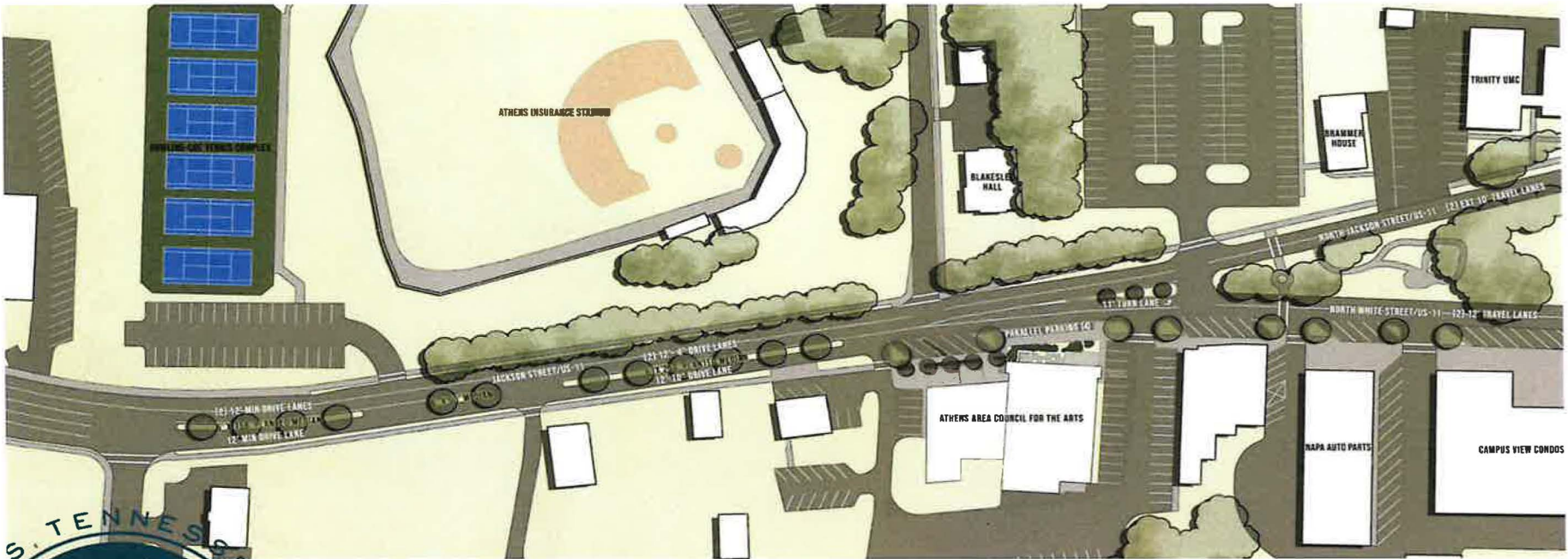
Action to Consider

To continue the grant process, a project needs to be identified so SETD can begin their process of writing and completing the grant application prior to the March 28, 2025 deadline. Four proposed projects that could be considered include:

- 1) Improvements to the area around Knight Park including park improvements, road improvements on N. Jackson Street, N. White Street, and College Street, landscaping, traffic calming measures, sidewalks, and pedestrian signals in general accordance with the Downtown Master Plan prepared and approved by the city in December 2020 (see attached concept plan).
- 2) Assist in partial funding of the construction of Fire Station #3.
- 3) Constructing a new Community Center.
- 4) Rehabilitating North City School into useable space.

Sam Saieed of SETD will attend this meeting to answer questions and concerns.

A motion, second, and vote are needed to approve a project so SETD can write the grant application. All application materials can then be approved during the March meetings.



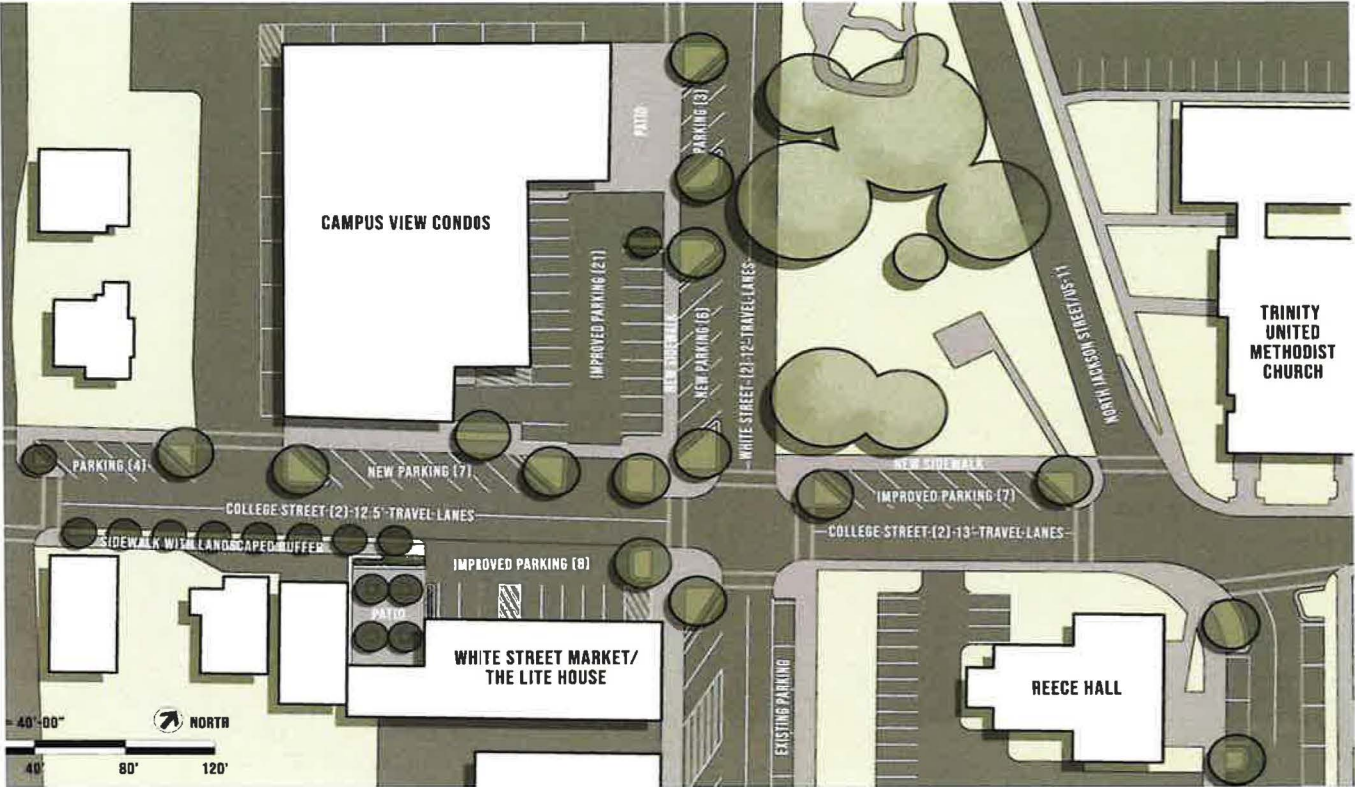
This conceptual redesign of North Jackson Street/US-11 removes one travel lane to calm traffic and improve the experience of entering downtown. This design features three minimum 12-foot travel lanes and a series of 6-foot vegetated medians that allow for turns at key intersections. These medians are envisioned planted with crape myrtles or similarly sized street trees. This plan also shows an improved continuous sidewalk connecting downtown with businesses along North Jackson Street. Angled and parallel on-street parking, generous sidewalks, and planted bump-outs replace the chaotic array of existing parking areas along the corridor while bringing new opportunities and a refreshed appearance to downtown businesses. An improved crossing area connects improvements to the campus of Tennessee Wesleyan, enhancing pedestrian access and safety.



JACKSON STREET, OPTION 1, SECTION: This section elevation illustrates the conceptual redesign of North Jackson Street/US-11. This design features three minimum 12-foot travel lanes and a 6-foot vegetated median in the existing right-of-way.



By more efficiently using existing rights-of-way and portions of bordering parking lots, Athens could work to transform this area and better connect downtown and Tennessee Wesleyan University. Using unnecessary additional turn lanes along White Street and College Street allows for the addition of 20 new on-street angled parking spaces. Along White Street, removing excessive paved area and better defining the entrance of the parking area at Campus View Condos creates the opportunity for a new sidewalk connecting downtown with the Arts Center and points north. Along College Street, White Street, and Jackson Street excess paving at intersections could be redesigned to incorporate landscaped bump-outs. While bringing much needed shade and improving the appearance of the street, these bump-outs minimize crossing distances and create a safer and more welcoming pedestrian experience. This plan shows improvements to the parking area at White Street Market/The LITE House, including the addition of an outdoor patio area for programming and events. Additional improvements include new crosswalks, a sidewalk, and improved on-street parking at the park across from Campus View Condos. In total, this plan shows 113 existing and proposed parking spaces, an addition of seven new parking spaces.



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JACKSON STREET AT
TENNESSEE WESLEYAN
UNIVERSITY

EXISTING: Jackson and White streets converge at the triangular park near the main entry to Tennessee Wesleyan University. While this prominent landscaped area features welcome signage, landscaping, and other amenities, the lack of formal crosswalks in this heavily trafficked area endangers pedestrians. Businesses shown at the right feature large, irregularly laid-out parking areas with continuous curb cuts. The lack of defined, continuous sidewalks further hampers pedestrian connectivity.

PROPOSED: Extending a planted median in the formerly striped asphalt area helps separate and slow traffic approaching downtown. This rendering shows an improved and clearly delineated crossing at the north end of the park. Additional improvements include angled on-street parking, expanded sidewalks, and landscaped bump-outs featuring large-canopy street trees.





COLLEGE STREET AT WHITE STREET

EXISTING (TOP): Currently, White Street approaching College Street features two one-way travel lanes and a right turn lane. The excessive pavement width and lack of safe crossing areas here encourages dangerous travel speeds and creates unsafe conditions for the many pedestrians and Wesleyan students who travel back and forth across White Street daily.

PROPOSED: Utilizing excess paved areas to bring angled on-street parking, expanded sidewalks, planted bump-outs, and more could improve pedestrian safety, add parking capacity, and create an improved sense of arrival downtown. Improvements shown, including mast-arm traffic signals, large-canopy street trees, and ADA-accessible crosswalks help unify the appearance of this area and extend the look of downtown northward along White Street.



PROPOSED, OPTION II: This option shows the previously proposed streetscaping improvements along White Street with the addition of angled on-street parking along College Street adjacent to White Street Market.

PROPOSED, OPTION III: This third option shows parallel on-street parking along College Street. Parallel parking allows for sidewalks in this area to be expanded for more outdoor activity at businesses like White Street Market.



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