



# Allen Street Promenade

## Focus Project 1 (Catalyst)

### 3-E: Allen Street Promenade

*Reinforce the 100 block of Allen Street, including the intersection with College Avenue, as the center of downtown and establish it as downtown's "town square." Implement as part of Catalyst project.*

*Implementation: **Borough of State College, Downtown Improvement District, Downtown Businesses, Property Owners***

*Streetscape Type A - Primary*

**Concept:** The overall concept for the Allen Street Promenade supports recommendations from previous master planning efforts to treat this block of Allen Street as a "great place"—one that clearly portrays itself as being the "town square" for State College. It is important to note that the proposal is not to designate this block of Allen Street as a "pedestrian mall"—a space that is permanently closed to automobiles. Rather, the design for this block of Allen Street allows great flexibility in how the block functions. Most of the time, the block will function as it currently does with two-way traffic and on-street parking. Other times, it could be closed to accommodate events or increased volumes of pedestrian traffic. It could be closed entirely (College Avenue to Beaver Avenue) or in segments (College Avenue to Calder Way or Calder Way to Beaver Avenue).

Initially, the block might only be closed a few times a year. Downtown Improvement District and the Borough could continue to experiment with regular closings certain evenings of the week, certain weekends or specific seasons, depending on on-going evaluation of the success of the closings and programming of the space. As the use of the space is evaluated, it will be important to involve the business community, particularly the Allen Street businesses.

*Top right: The gates to Pattee Mall on the University campus serve as the most profound marker in downtown of the relationship between "town" and "gown."*

*Bottom right: Allen Street already functions as the location for special events downtown, which sometimes require street closure between College and Beaver Avenues. The master plan seeks to build on this positive experience of place by further establishing Allen street as downtown's "town square."*



Events such as "Lunch 'n' Learn" and "Lunch Break" could occur in this space as could new festivals that emerge as described earlier under Recommendation 1-F.

Specific design enhancements include the removal of the curb to create a flush paved surface of predominantly brick. While brick paving is recommended, concrete unit pavers or stamped concrete may also be considered but should be determined at the time of detailed design. Different use areas (parking, travel lanes, etc.) will be defined by bollards, planters, street trees, ornamental lighting and pavement markings. Electrical service and water hook-ups will also be

provided to accommodate performance venues. While this block will be open to traffic most of the time, it will “feel” like a space where pedestrians are the primary user and vehicles are secondary users. At the time of detail design, the spacing of these elements will need to be coordinated with businesses and their delivery requirements to accommodate this important function.

Other design elements will include kiosks, signage and banners to reinforce the downtown community brand, bicycle accommodations and public art. Earlier master plans suggested overhead “string lights” as a way to further enliven the street. While this would certainly enhance the atmosphere of the street, it is important to maintain the view to the Allen Street gates and Pattee Mall and avoid overhead elements that would detract from this view. Instead, these should be reserved for Calder Way as described later in this report.

An additional early opportunity for this block is to experiment with “pop-up cafes” or “parklets” in place of some of the parking spaces. These would allow the expansion of the pedestrian zone in some areas without having to close the street to vehicles and parking. This concept is employed throughout the world to accommodate outdoor dining, additional seating areas, vendor carts or merchant display areas for certain seasons, while allowing the space to revert to parking during other times of the year. There are a number of ways that this can be managed. In New York City, these outdoor seating areas are open to anyone and shared among businesses since they are located within the public right-of-way. In Frederick, Maryland, individual businesses can obtain a permit to use the space for their business and patrons (outdoor dining or display space), provided there is unobstructed pedestrian access along the sidewalk. The Borough and Downtown Improvement District could experiment with this concept even before the new streetscape is constructed. Frederick, Maryland allowed two pop-up cafes as a multi-month experiment in 2012.

With the complete reconstruction of the street and removal of the curb, there is an opportunity to incorporate innovative



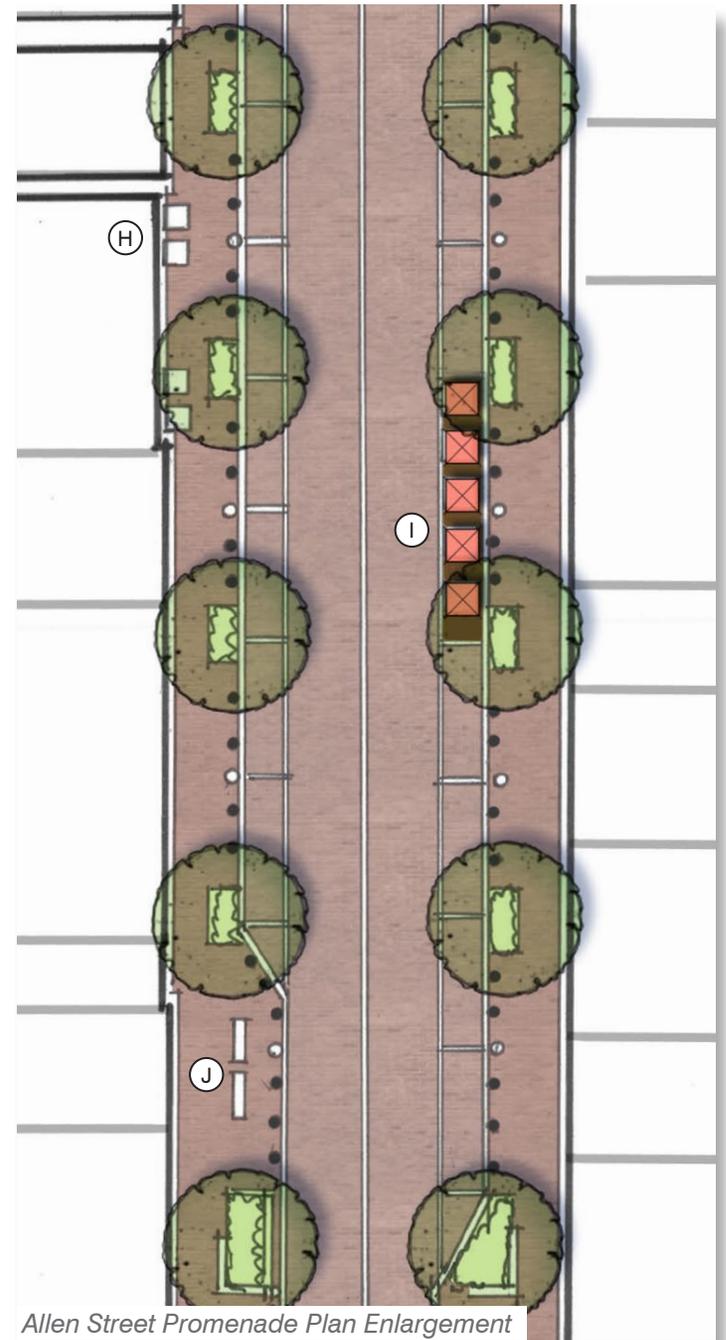
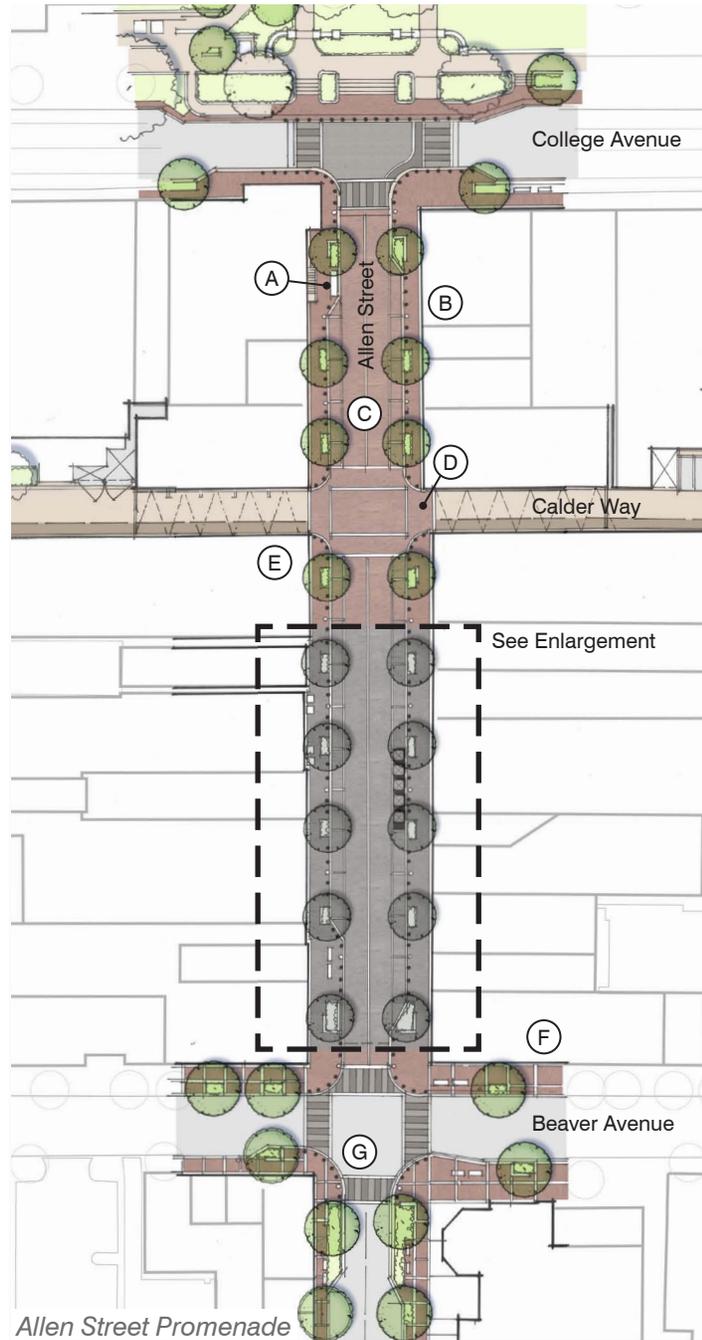
*Many precedents exist for continuous brick paving along urban streets and adjacent sidewalks. Court Street in Greenville, SC (top left) shows how bollards can be used to separate vehicular and pedestrian zones. The roadway as seen in Annapolis, MD (bottom left) sits below the sidewalk as part of a typical street section, but the uniformity of materials conveys a pedestrian-oriented space while still facilitating vehicular access to commercial uses.*

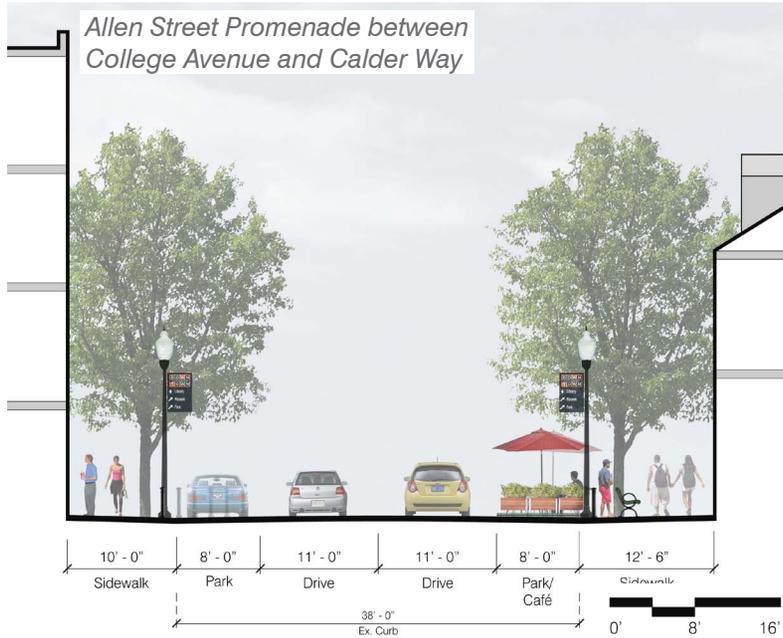


storm water management practices into the streetscape design. In particular, water from building downspouts might be directed to new interconnected tree planting pits or collected for irrigation of planter pots. Similarly, tree planting pits may be interconnected to utilize storm water runoff from the street. However, because of the limestone geology, geotechnical surveys will need to be conducted during the design phase to determine any techniques that might be appropriate.

Additional design recommendations and materials are outlined in Appendix C: Design Guide. The design concepts for the intersection with College Avenue is described and illustrated on the following pages under “College Avenue.”

- A. *Enlarged Bulb-Out and Bicycle Storage*
- B. *Brick Sidewalks; Bollards Between Sidewalks and Street*
- C. *Brick Paving in Street; Flush with Sidewalk Grade*
- D. *Brick Crosswalks at Calder Way*
- E. *Relocated or New Street Tree, Typ.*
- F. *Brick Paving Along Beaver Avenue to Match Existing Borough Standard Adjacent to Schlow Library*
- G. *Stamped Concrete Crosswalks to Match Treatment Along College Avenue; Center of Intersection Remains Asphalt*
- H. *Outdoor Seating/ Merchandise Display Opportunities*
- I. *"Pop-Up Cafes" or "Parklets" in Parallel Parking Zone; May Be Temporary or Permanent and May Rotate Locations*





“Pop-up cafes” or “parklets” utilize space typically devoted to parallel parking to expand the pedestrian environment of the street. These spaces can be temporary or permanent and have the flexibility to rotate locations so that businesses can share in the opportunity to service more clients. This strategy could be implemented on Allen Street to add activity and color to the street as well as offering outdoor gathering and/or dining spaces that do not currently exist downtown.

(Top left: Old San Juan, Puerto Rico; Bottom left: Baltimore, MD)

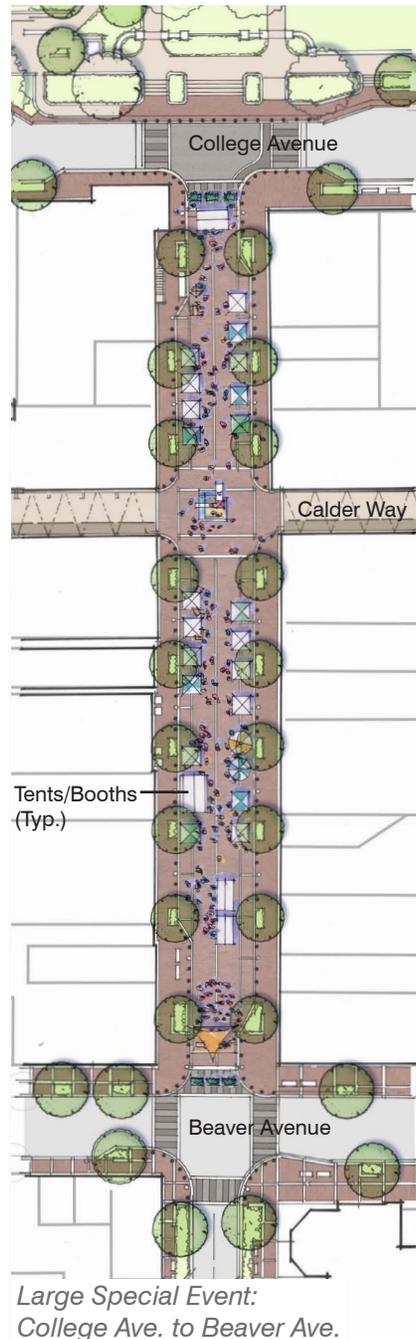


*Large Special Event*

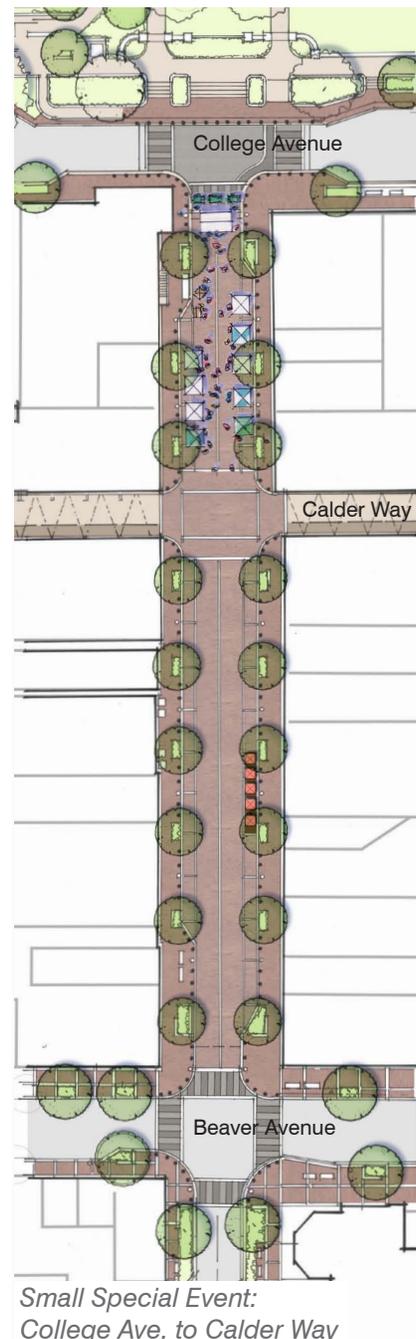
- Performance Space at College Avenue and Beaver Avenue
- Activity Node at Calder Way
- Vendor Spaces and Outdoor Dining Located in Parallel Parking Zone

*Small Special Event Options*

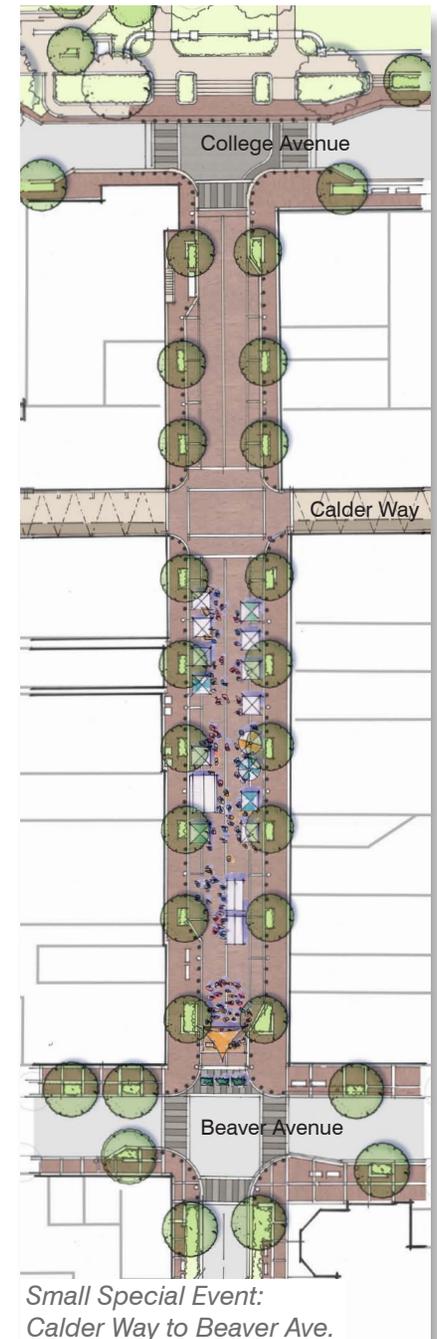
- Performance Space at College Avenue or Beaver Avenue
- Vendor Spaces and Outdoor Dining Located in Parallel Parking Zone
- Intersection with Calder Way Remains Open to Allow for Vehicular Circulation



*Large Special Event:  
College Ave. to Beaver Ave.*



*Small Special Event:  
College Ave. to Calder Way*



*Small Special Event:  
Calder Way to Beaver Ave.*