

Atchison's downtown Commercial Street renovation delayed

(KAIR)--The City of Atchison's downtown overhaul is underway, with renovation of the city's long-standing, former downtown pedestrian mall, comprising the 500 and 600 blocks of Commercial Street, continuing. However, with the recent rainy weather, work is now expected to finish later than had been anticipated.

According to a release from the City of Atchison Monday, the longer-than-planned construction schedule was likely due to what the release called "a difficult period of weather delays in recent weeks." Now, with the late week thunderstorms bringing additional rainfall, a completion date around mid-July is expected.

According to the release, when the 500-600 Commercial Street Project began with demolition work earlier this year, "the City had targeted a June completion date," with the release stating the City will "be sure to share schedule updates as they become available in the upcoming weeks."

The work, which began in February, includes removal of the mall, with the one-time foot-traffic-only area being converted for vehicle traffic. That will make the one-time mall-area resemble other areas of Commercial Street, and bring the location closer to how it was utilized prior to the mall's construction.

According to the City, the 500 to 600 block-stretch of Commercial Street was converted into the pedestrian mall after two flash-floods in 1958 devastated the downtown area, and "hastened the replacement of many of the oldest commercial buildings."

The Atchison City Commission voted last year to move forward with demolition of the mall, with 75-percent of the demolition project's cost being funded through a Kansas Department of Transportation grant. That leaves the City responsible for the remaining 25-percent.

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