



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers  
Chair, Center of the City Task Force

FROM: Howard S. Lazarus, City Administrator

SUBJECT: Interim Use Proposal – Center of the City Commons

DATE: September 23, 2019

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This memorandum provides an Interim Use Proposal for the Center of the City Commons, as requested in Council Resolution [R-19-263](#), *Resolution Directing the City Administrator to Develop an Interim Plan for the Use of the Library Lot to Support Community Activities*. The resolution directs two outcomes:

- The City Administrator to work collaboratively with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), City staff, the Library Green Conservancy (LGC), and the Center of the City Task Force (CoCTF) to identify a process for regular scheduling of the Library Lot; development of a public-private partnership with the Library Green Conservancy, and the financial impacts of transitioning the site away from its current primary use for surface parking; and
- The City Administrator will provide regular updates to Council on the status of these efforts and provide a final interim plan to Council not later than September 30, 2019.

In compliance with this direction, the City Administrator developed the following three options for discussion with interested stakeholders:

- Option 1 – No Change to Current Status: The lot still has as its primary purpose the generation of parking revenues and works with entities that seek to use the space on a case-by-case basis. We should consider if the net revenues should be placed in a dedicated account to fund the temporary improvements described in Options 2 and 3 below.
- Option 2 – Install some temporary/movable “street furniture” that allows for passive use and events as the primary purpose, but still enables the space to be used for special event parking. This changes the focus from a parking lot to a public space, but still provides for some

flexibility. As in Option 1, we should consider whether or not to allocate the net revenues (if any) to a dedicated use.

- Option 3 – Perform some fixed improvements that preclude the space from being used for parking and manage solely as a passive use space with special event programming.

Input has been received from multiple entities, including the following: LGC, CoCTF), Ann Arbor District Library (AADL), DDA, City Staff, and other stakeholders. The feedback was presented in the August 31<sup>st</sup> memo to Mayor and Council on this topic. Based upon this input, the following recommendations are provided:

- ***The City should pursue a modified Option 1 through the end of the current fiscal year (FY20),*** which ends June 30, 2020. As part of the budget planning for FY21, the City should start to accrue funds equivalent to a portion of the parking revenues that can be used to advance the planning effort and conceptual designs that will be presented in the Center of the City Task Force Report.
- ***DDA should retain management control of and maintenance responsibility for the property during the interim period.*** DDA will continue to coordinate and schedule uses of the surface parking area in coordination with City staff as it has done in the past. DDA should take a more leading role in promoting programming of the space and advertising scheduled events.
- ***The LGC must develop its business plan, including an ongoing fund raising approach.*** Absent this commitment, the City should evaluate whether or not the LGC can be viewed as a viable partner into the future. As part of the plan, the LGC, working with the City Administrator’s Office, should develop a calendar of events. Examples include Blooms Day, Sonic Lunch, Ann Arbor Art Center exhibitions, and youth programs. Potential partners include AADL, Ann Arbor Art Center, Public Art Commission, the University Musical Society, the Bank of Ann Arbor, and downtown merchant groups and property owners.
- ***The use of the lot should remain flexible through the end of FY20*** – continuing to provide parking during the week and conversion to a place for both programmed events and passive recreation on the weekends. LGC should take on the role of actively transforming the space prior to the weekend and returning it to an operational configuration prior to the next work week.
- ***The plan for temporary/interim improvements should be developed in alignment with the efforts of the Center of the City Task Force.*** Potential elements may include the following:
  - Internet connective should be provided at no cost.

- Utilities services (electricity, water, and wastewater) need to be brought on site.
  - Public restrooms may be considered.
  - Performance space, both temporary and fixed, should be accommodated.
  - Passive use furniture will be required (installed tables, benches, et al).
  - Play and game areas for all ages and barrier free should be included.
  - Space for bicycle parking should be allocated.
  - Generation of solar electricity should be included and incorporated into the design elements.
- ***Library Lane, access to the parking structure, and the dedication of an alleyway along the north and east edges of the property must be provided.*** The design of these public easements in these areas can be accomplished in a way that contributes to the use of the space, allowing for temporary closures to support events as needed.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance on this matter.

cc: J Fournier  
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