



## Downtown Community Gathering Space

To: Davidson Board of Commissioners  
From: Kim Fleming, Economic Development  
Date: July 23, 2019  
Re: Downtown Community Gathering Space

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### 1. OVERVIEW

At the February 12, 2019 meeting, the board reviewed the revised plan for the downtown community gathering space. Feedback from the BOC at this meeting was generally positive with the exception of the discussion about artificial turf used on the fall zone for the playground. There are two issues that need to be addressed before moving forward with the project; design and funding.

#### Design:

Staff met with the Downtown merchants and Farmers' Market staff to review the revised plans on March 1, 2019. The businesses were concerned about the loss of seven (7) parking spaces. They were in favor of using turf on the fall zone. Their decision was based overwhelmingly on the fact that it had rained for a month straight and the mulch in the current Tot Lot was a mud pit.

Mayor Knox met with a turf supplier and provided samples of potential options.

During the weekend of Art on the Green (April 26-28), we canvassed people that were in the area behind Summit to ask their preference of turf vs. mulch for the fall zone of the playground area. Admittedly this was not a scientific study by any means, but the vast majority of the dozens of people surveyed preferred turf. They cited the ability to sit on it and drainage as major positives. Some children seemed to prefer mulch because they could throw it.

#### Funding:

Mayor Knox secured a \$100,000 grant last year from the state for this project. We need an additional \$275,000 to complete the project.

We would like to utilize unassigned fund balance to start work on the space as we've already discussed the project in multiple public meetings and solicited citizen feedback. The board of commissioners would have the option of using G.O. Bonds to reimburse the Town's fund balance.

It would also be advantageous to schedule the construction of the space during the off season of the Davidson Farmers' Market (i.e. this fall).

An alternative to synthetic turf could be rubber or foam that still falls under the unitary synthetic material category that provides the appropriate tot lot surfacing with low maintenance costs.

Staff recommends the board move forward with the project including synthetic turf or some other unitary synthetic material such as rubber or foam surface at the tot lot and appropriate the \$275,000 from unassigned fund balance along with a reimbursement resolution (the resolution preserves the ability for the town board to decide later to use 2017 general obligation bonds but we would need to front the project with unassigned fund balance) at the July 23 meeting in order for us to move forward with implementing the project starting in the fall coinciding with the slowdown in the farmers market season.

## 2. RELATED TOWN GOALS

### Strategic Plan Goals:

#### Economic Development:

The town of Davidson will use existing assets and manage growth to encourage an appropriate mix of residential and commercial development.

#### Community Engagement:

The town of Davidson will have inclusive engagement with the community to encourage substantive, respectful, and open dialogue, increase participation, and foster a sense of belonging.

#### Greenways, Open Space, and Parks:

The town of Davidson will increase physical and mental health of Davidson citizens. Preserve open space and promote Greenway connectivity. Provide ample opportunities for play and discovery (active and passive).

#### Partnerships:

The town of Davidson will build on existing relationships to strengthen partnerships with strategic organizations and institutions.

#### Core Values:

- The physical, social and intellectual well-being of Davidson citizens is fundamental to our community so town government will provide and encourage enjoyable, safe, and affordable recreational and cultural lifelong learning opportunities.
- Davidson's economic health is essential to its remaining a sustainable community so town government will judiciously encourage and guide the location of new business.

#### Constituents served:

All citizens.

## 3. OPTIONS/PROS & CONS

Option 1: Approve the project as proposed.

#### Pros:

Creates improvements for the downtown gathering space.

Fulfills the obligation with the grant.

Cons:

Option 2: Do not approve the project as proposed.

Pros:

Saves the match funds and can be utilized in other areas.

Cons:

Does not create improvements for the downtown gathering space.

Does not fulfill the obligation with the grant.

#### **4. FYI or RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Recommend approval of the project with a unitary synthetic material as the surface for the tot lot, approve the budget amendment, and reimbursement resolution as presented.

#### **5. NEXT STEPS**

If approved, staff will move forward with implementation of the project.