

**373-1117-2014**  
**Approval to Participate in the**  
**Michigan Economic Development Corporations'**  
**"Public Spaces, Community Places"**  
**Crowdfunding Matching Grant Program**

October 31, 2014

The Honorable Mayor Ellison  
 and  
 Members of the City Commission:

In July and August, picnic tables needed for the Royal Oak Commission for the Arts' Thursday-evening concert series "pop up park" were stored in the pedestrian plaza south of the Center Street parking deck. The simple placement of tables in the area unintentionally transformed it into an outdoor destination for people to eat and relax. After the concert series ended in mid-August, it was suggested by area businesses that the tables had ultimately created a good public space and as such should remain in place.

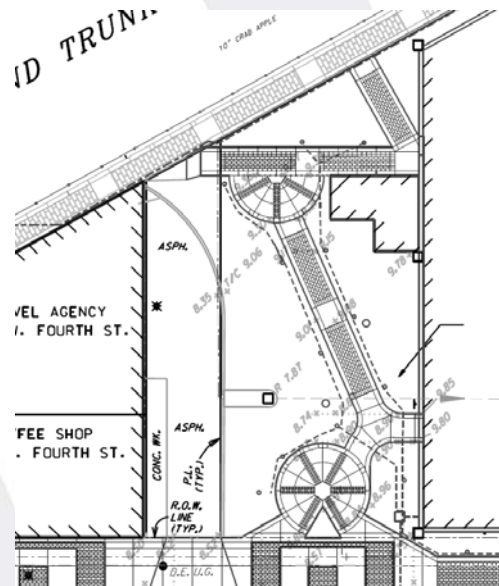
With its steady foot traffic (up to 1,500 cars park at the Center Street structure daily) there exists an opportunity to further capitalize on this central location to inspire well-being and connectivity.

**Public Spaces, Community Places**

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) – in partnership with the Michigan Municipal League and the Michigan-based crowd funding platform Patronicity – has rolled out a creative funding mechanism for its Public Spaces, Community Places initiative. This program allows local communities to fundraise for transformational projects that in turn may be eligible to receive up to \$100,000 in matching grants from MEDC.

Staff has researched this funding opportunity and believes it can be used as a means to transform an underutilized plaza south of the Center Street parking structure into a nifty green space that offers residents, students, professionals and visitors opportunities to work, play and network in smart new ways.

Creating a green connected 'smart park' – which uses technology, sustainable landscaping and the use of materials that have the lowest impact on the environment – can be a wise placemaking strategy that will facilitate economic, social and ecological vitality.



Existing plaza on Center Street at Fourth Street

Potential 'smart park' ideas include:

- Right plant, right place: sustainable landscaping and rain gardens

- Beacon technology: provide visitors to downtown with a universal pass to discover what Royal Oak has to offer via smartphone technology
- Introduce interactive LED lights
- Tables to eat and work
- Solar seating/device charging stations
- Play elements for children using durable recyclable materials
- Public WiFi
- QR codes that give information regarding sustainable gardens, train schedules and city events.
- Waste receptacles that separate plastic and glass
- Bike racks
- ADA accessible
- Unique signage

If directed to move forward on the Public Spaces, Community Places crowdfunding initiative, staff would like to hire the Detroit-based Living Lab design studio to work with the community and stakeholders to come up with a unique plan for the area that will make smart use of the plaza. Living Lab partners and Royal Oak residents, Leah Groya and Jason MacDonald propose holding a half-day collaborative design session that will ultimately lead to a concept plan, supporting graphics, and a budgetary cost estimate. To complete this scope of work, the fee is not to exceed \$4,000.

Once the design is finalized, a multi-step public outreach plan will be put in place to reach the Center Street Smart Park fundraising goal. The marketing strategy will potentially include social media, printed media, a launch party, 'open houses' at the site and numerous meetings with stakeholders. The recommend length of a campaign is 30 days.

Staff approached the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Staff with this idea on Oct. 30, 2014 and received unanimous support.

We request and recommend the following motion be adopted:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, the City Commission authorizes the expenditure of \$4,000 for the development of a plan for a smart park at the pedestrian plaza next to the Center Street parking structure and the application to participate in the Public Spaces, Community Places crowd funding/grant initiative.

Respectfully submitted,  
Judy Davids  
Community Engagement Specialist

Approved,

  
Donald E. Johnson  
City Manager