



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS MINOT DOWNTOWN GATHERING PLACE

- Q: What exactly is this project? Is it just another park?
- A: *No, it is not just another park. The city in the HUD approved 2016 Action Plan presents this project as serving two goals which are a destination venue for the downtown and as a resource for all Minot residents to come together for shared community activities and programs.*
- Q: Why did the city put this project in its National Disaster Resilience Phase II Grant Application?
- A: *According to the documentation provided by the city to HUD in support of the application, the idea for the Gathering Place was the result of extensive community engagement through many public meetings for which there was a very strong expression of need for a venue in the downtown where residents could get together and have a strong sense of community.*
- Q: How did the city decide on \$6 million for this project?
- A: *The Phase 1 application for the NDR grant competition set the amount at more than \$8 million and according to the 2015 documentation done by the city this estimate was based on studying costs of similar existing destination venues in operation such as Rapid City, SD. The city had originally asked for almost \$200 million for all NDR Projects. It had to cut all projects' allocations when it was told by HUD it would receive \$74.3 million which is how it was reduced to \$6 million in 2016.*
- Q: Once the project is done, how is this destination venue going to be maintained and managed? Where are the monies going to come for all the operating costs?
- A: *NDR grant funds can only be used for capital costs and not operating costs. During the next 12 to 18 months, the city, working with the Park District and other stakeholders, will establish a business plan to define the roles and responsibilities for maintenance and management covering the use of the Gathering Place with the goal being to come as close as possible to have the venue be self-sufficient. Similar existing venues in surrounding states will be studied both in terms of how they are operated and how revenues are generated.*
- Q: Maybe in 2015 this Gathering Place idea made sense but in 2018 maybe not. Why can't we use this \$6 million for something else?
- A: *The NDR grant was a competition among 40 cities, counties, and states. Each application and each project in each application was scored and only the 13 highest scored applications out of the 40 received funds, including Minot. The HUD rules, because it was a competition, stipulate that any attempt to change use of the funds for*

*another project or eliminate a project will result in the entire grant being rescored with the risk that it will have a lower score and some of the grant will have to be returned to HUD.*

Q: What is the timeline for this project?

A: *The current plan is to complete all preparation work in 2018 to able to begin construction at the start of the 2019 construction season. Preparation work will include property acquisition, building demolition, site preparation and the design of the Gathering Place.*

Q: Will the public have a say in the design of the Gathering Place?

A: *Yes. Each step of the way in the process leading to construction, there will be meetings for the public to be provided opportunities to give their input and thoughts. One such meeting and opportunity will be to view the preliminary designs and another opportunity will be to view the final draft designs.*

Q: Does the Gathering Place have to be 2 acres?

A: *The city in its 2015 Phase II NDR application voluntarily offered that the project would be 2 acres. However, if reality results, based on what can be acquired, that the project size be more or less than 2 acres then that should not be a problem with HUD as long as the intent and purpose of the project as represented by the city in 2015 can be accomplished.*

Q: Does the Gathering Place have to be in the Downtown?

A: *Yes. The city in its 2015 Phase II NDR application specifically identified the location of the project to be in the downtown and offered as the justification for the project that it was critically needed to be in the downtown as leverage to promote revitalization and recovery of the downtown from the negative impacts from the 2011 flood and because the downtown is viewed as the heart of the city.*

Q: This project has been called several different names. What is accurate name for the project?

A: *The commonly used project name is the Gathering Place but the project name in the Action Plan approved by HUD for use of these funds is "Downtown Community Public Gathering Space"*