



## Memorandum

**To:** Town Council  
**From:** Town Manager's Office  
**Date:** October 6, 2020  
**Subject:** Update on Children's Garden of Learning temporary location – Lionshead Site

Over the past several months, staff has undertaken a significant amount of due diligence to identify a viable temporary location for the Children's Garden of Learning (CGL) facility. As you know the need for a temporary and future permanent location for CGL is necessitated by the fact that the Town has identified Middle Creek Lot 3, as a town-owned parcel that is critical for the Town to meet its deed-restricted housing goals. Our primary focus has been on the concept of remodeling the Community Development municipal building to allow for both childcare use and a small number of town staff such as our Building officials who have daily interaction with the public. In addition to the fact the site is owned by the town, the site also was appealing due to the fact the municipal site is appropriately zoned for early childcare purposes, and that most town staff in the building could be re-located for multiple years in privately owned office space in close proximity to Town Hall.

**Through work by staff and a contracted architectural firm, it has been determined that total costs for a remodel of the Community Development building and the relocation of town staff offices to accommodate a temporary CGL facility will be in excess of \$5.0 million.** Those costs include:

- Interior and exterior modifications of the Com Dev Building
- 1,000 sq. ft. expansion of current building to meet CGL-specific requests
- Creation of required outdoor play space
- Reconfiguration and improvement of parking, drop-off and access to the S. Frontage Rd.
- Lease of private office space for TOV staff displaced by CGL in the Com Dev building
- Cost of interior finishes of new private space to accommodate TOV staff
- Relocation of the community recycling center (new feasible site not yet identified)

In addition to the significant public cost of relocating CGL to the municipal building, staff and our contracted design and construction consultants have determined that it will be unlikely to have the municipal building ready for CGL occupancy by the desired date of August 2021 to coincide with the typical start of school year. The design team has committed to ensure occupancy by no later than September 15, 2021.

In an effort to find temporary space for CGL that would be more fiscally responsible of tax-payer dollars and in closer proximity to key amenities and necessary parking, and continue to meet the needs of CGL, **Town staff undertook a parallel analysis of the town-owned Charter Bus Lot adjacent to the Lionshead Parking Structure.** The lot is comparable in size to the current CGL lot and by utilizing a "design-build" process, the Town will be able to deliver a high-quality temporary facility and outdoor play space to CGL by August 2021. **Equally important, the town would be able to develop the facility at Lionshead at a cost significantly less than \$5M based on preliminary estimates.** Costs would include all CGL facility requirements and outdoor play spaces necessary to

meet State licensing and all adopted building and zoning code requirements for early childcare facilities. Advantages of the Lionshead site over the Municipal Building site include:

- Ability to be ready for CGL occupancy by August 2021
- The programmatic, design and spatial needs and desires articulated by Children of Garden Learning faculty and board representatives can more than be accommodated in the building.
- Entirely new construction
- Improved traffic circulation for pick up and drop off compared to the Municipal Site
- Easy access S. Frontage Road without the need for turn lane improvements
- The site is centrally located in Vail with excellent vehicular access, circulation and drop-off.
- The site is within safe, convenient and easy pedestrian access to Lionshead Village and Vail Village
- The site is in a sunny, south-facing location, similar to the existing Children's Garden of Learning.
- The site is located on a highly used and frequently serviced public transit route.
- No conflict with the future roundabout construction planned adjacent to Vail Health on the S. Frontage Road
- Close proximity to Library (450'), Dobson Arena, Gore Creek Trail and walkability to Village play areas and transit stops
- Cost effectiveness
- Highly flexible design opportunity to meet CGL and Design Review Board requirements
- Does not displace current town staff and necessitate the public to visit additional buildings for public services
- Water and sewer tap already paid
- Availability of covered parking for CGL teachers in the Lionshead parking structure
- Childcare is a use allowed by zoning, subject to the issuance of a conditional use permit
- TIF funds may possibly be used to fund the construction

It was been a challenge to find a temporary site for CGL that can meet the programmatic and space needs of the CGL staff and students and we appreciate CGL's patience and input as we've gone through this process. The due diligence we've all undertaken to both identify and eliminate a range of site alternatives has been an important process to go through with CGL and we are excited that the town-owned Lionshead site has risen to the top as a viable site that clearly has advantages over the other alternatives pursued. We at the Town of Vail look forward to working closely with CGL over the coming months to design and construct the Lionshead site for your organization and the families who utilize CGL, and appreciate your ongoing collaborative spirit in this initiative.