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TRINITY ECO PRAYER PARK
(A Sustainable Green Cities Task Force pilot project)

**Rapid City Community Planning
& Development Services**

Conditional Use Permit Letter of Intent (1/13/2012)

By building Trinity Eco Prayer Park, Trinity Lutheran Church Endowment Foundation will create a natural, open space downtown where people can reflect on how they relate to God, one another, and the planet. The threefold goals of the park are:

- 1) to demonstrate examples of innovative landscape techniques that model thoughtful stewardship of the earth and encourage others to use sustainable designs for their homes and businesses.
- 2) to create a natural, open area downtown for people to reflect and meditate.
- 3) to provide a space for outdoor gatherings.

The park will function as an outdoor extension of the work of Trinity Lutheran Church and be capable of hosting any church activities that could take place in an outdoor setting. Additionally the park will enable the church to expand into offerings in Environmental and Sustainability Education using the park as a meeting place and demonstration site. We are proposing a pergola structure to function as a space for picnics or weddings. The design of the pergola will use natural stone and wood to keep with the environmental aesthetic. There is an open space designed in the middle of the park, which is intended to be a flexible space for gathering. A temporary white 30' by 40' tent owned by the church may be used in conjunction with special events. The majority of the time, the space will be left open.

Although the park is owned by the Foundation, the public will normally have access to the park, except in cases where a church or private event scheduled by the Foundation requires access to be limited. The park will incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles, night lighting and inhospitable landscaping choices to assist with safety and security issues.

The Foundation aims to follow sustainable landscape design principles as outlined by the Council of Educators of Landscape Architecture. Sustainable design goals include: 1) planning in harmony with the natural environment, 2) working to avoid depleting or damaging other ecosystems, 3) conservation of energy and resources (like soil, water, nutrients), and 4) maintaining or increasing diversity of species. The sustainable park plan is in keeping with contemporary Lutheran concern for the planet as well as the long-standing Biblical concept of stewardship of the earth.

By choosing plants, grasses and trees that are native to the western South Dakota prairie and Black Hills, the park maintenance plan will aim to use less energy, water, fertilizers, and herbicides than are routinely used in the upkeep of parks or lawns. Preliminary plans are to make use of rainwater-harvesting that will collect runoff from portions of the church property (including the parking lot), Hardees's property, and the alley. This will keep thousands of gallons of water from entering the city stormwater system every year. Stormwater will be managed on-site. The placement of species into four distinct areas of the park that replicate regional biomes will cause the park to also function as a botanical preserve.

The park's operation hours will be until 10 p.m. to coordinate with the hours of City parks.

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