



NEWS RELEASE

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**EMERALD YOUTH ANNOUNCES PLAN FOR MULTIPURPOSE FACILITY
AND SPORTS COMPLEX IN LONSDALE**

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – Emerald Youth Foundation has announced plans for a world-class, multimillion dollar complex in the heart of Lonsdale that will serve young people and their families.

The project includes two multipurpose, synthetic turf fields for soccer, flag football and other sports. Additionally, the complex includes a more than 30,000 square foot multipurpose facility featuring a learning center; two full-size gymnasiums with basketball courts, locker rooms, concessions and kitchen; fitness area with weight room, dance/aerobics room and cardio theater; assembly room for gatherings; and a worship and performing arts area with practice rooms.

The proposed complex will be situated on land along Texas Avenue between Stonewall and Sherman Streets currently owned by the City of Knoxville, as well as a portion of unused property next to Sam E. Hill Preschool adjacent to Lonsdale Homes.

“From the very beginning, this project has been about addressing a need that has been outlined by Lonsdale residents for many years,” said Emerald Youth Foundation President and CEO Steve Diggs. “Our hope and our prayer is that it will be a transformative addition to the neighborhood, and a transformative addition to the lives of the young people it will engage.”

The proposed complex will be developed and operated by Emerald Youth Foundation. A section of Minnesota Avenue will be modified for pedestrian and parking use.

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“This project is consistent with the vision created 12 years ago through the Lonsdale Neighborhood Plan as adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Commission and City Council,” said Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero. “A complex like this one in Lonsdale will be a game changer. Emerald Youth has a long track record in our city, including in Lonsdale, and I know they will do an outstanding job for the neighborhood.”

The project is anticipated to open in late 2018, pending approval from city and county officials as well as from Knox County Schools.

“I look forward to working with County Commission and the school system in support of this project,” said Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett. “This center could make a long-term difference in Lonsdale.”

Church leaders in Lonsdale have long sought a community project such as this one which is proposed.

“The project will add safety and vitality to the area and immediately change its image,” said New Friendship Missionary Baptist Church pastor Dr. Joseph Smith. “I also know it will bring about neighborhood pride and unity.”

Initial estimates for the project total roughly \$10 million. Construction will be funded through private donations, and the City of Knoxville has proposed to streetscape the area.

About Emerald Youth Foundation

Emerald Youth Foundation is a Christian, urban youth ministry that serves more than 2,000 children, teens, young adults and their families each year in the heart of Knoxville, Tennessee. Emerald Youth works with a coalition of churches and faith-based organizations to implement its programs that include: JustLead – a youth leadership program with after-school, discipleship, education and health components; and Emerald Youth Sports – an outreach in partnership with Fellowship of Christian Athletes featuring baseball, basketball, volleyball, soccer, track, swimming and other sports.

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