



Board: Downtown Development Authority
Agenda Date: May 15, 2026
Presenter: Patricia West

Staff Report

Agenda Item Title:

Michigan Downtown Association | South Haven Workshop

Background:

The Michigan Downtown Association (MDA) Summer Workshop, *Keeping the Magic of Strong Michigan Downtowns Alive*, will be held in South Haven, Michigan, on June 3–4, 2026. The workshop provides educational and networking opportunities for downtown development professionals and community leaders from across the state. Sessions will focus on topics including public spaces, retail trends, downtown design, placemaking, and strategies for creating vibrant and desirable downtown districts. The event also includes a guided walking tour of downtown South Haven led by the local Downtown Development Authority.

Patricia West and Downtown Ambassador, Samantha Gaudino, have both expressed interest in attending the workshop as a professional development opportunity. Attendance would provide insight into best practices and innovative downtown initiatives that may support ongoing projects and future planning efforts within the City of Gladstone. Approval is requested for registration, lodging, mileage, and related travel expenses associated with attendance at the workshop.

Fiscal Effect:

Registration: \$150/each
Mileage: Per IRS Rate (72.5 cents/mile)
Hotel: ~\$600/employee (\$300/night – 2 nights)
Bridge Fare: \$4.00/car (\$16.00 total)
Meal Reimbursement: Per City Reimbursement Policy
Estimated Total: \$2800-\$3000

Supporting Documentation:

MDA Summer Workshop Agenda

Recommendation:

Motion to approve the travel request for the DDA Director and Downtown Ambassador to attend the Michigan Downtown Association Summer Workshop in South Haven, Michigan, with reimbursement for eligible expenses in accordance with the City's expense reimbursement policy.