

## Downtown Development Authority of City of Madison Heights

### Memorandum

**Date:** April 10, 2026  
**To:** Downtown Development Authority Board Members  
**From:** Giles Tucker, Community Development Director  
**Subject:** MHDDA Strategic Plan Contractor Selection

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At our February and March meetings City and Main Street Oakland County staff provided a refresher of the Main Street Approach and provided a roadmap for where our DDA needs to go to be designated as a “Partner-Level” community by Main Street Oakland County and all its benefits including technical assistance support and access to downtown grant resources for our businesses. The main milestone we need to reach to get there is the completion of a downtown Strategic Plan.

A Strategic Plan serves as a “north star” for the DDA. A Strategic Plan is a goal driven plan that sets a shared vision for downtown, identifies priority outcomes, identifies timelines and performance measures. Staff provided a scope of work including deliverables to two contractors who have in turn provide proposals:

#### **Pow! Strategies- \$10,000 Optional Additional Services**

Pow Strategies was founded in 2015 by Cristina Sheppard-Decius, who is well known as a leader in downtown revitalization in southeast Michigan. Past clients include Downtown Dearborn Ypsilanti DDA, Alpena DDA, South Lyon DDA, Lyon Township DDA, Wixom DDA, Lake Orion DDA, Oxford DDA, Auburn Hills DDA, Romeo DDA, Frankenmuth DDA, Ferndale DDA, Michigan Downtown Association, Michigan Main Street, Main Street Oakland County, Downtown Brighton.

Not only does Cristina and her team completed project is similar scope, but she also has extensive experience as a DDA Director including in Ferndale from 2000-2015 and Downtown Dearborn from 2015-2022 and currently serves as Chairperson for the Michigan Downtown Association. Her practical knowhow, and 15 years in Ferndale give her and her team a solid “boots on the ground” understanding of our district and how it fits in with the surrounding areas included Ferndale, Royal Oak and Hazel Park.

#### **Giffels & Webster**

Giffels And Webster is Planning and Engineering firm based in Detroit with over 70 years of experience working with municipalities, including the Madison Heights 2020 Master Plan and more recently Clawson’s Downtown 5-Year Strategic Plan adopted at the end of 2025. Giffels Webster is one of the primary municipal planning companies in southeast Michigan and would be able to draw on a wide range of surrounding projects and plans they’ve developed to produce a high-quality and relevant strategic plan for Madison Heights.

**Redevelopment of Ready Communities (RRC) Technical Assistance (TA) Grant Funding**

I have spoken with Stephanie Pena from the RRC program about this project and its ballpark costs and she has said that MEDC will support this project with a 75% grant match, or possibly even more. However, to lock in a grant award amount, we need to confirm which contractor and the total price. For this reason, the recommendation below is to request the DDA board approve the full costs of this project, but it is highly probable that most of this cost will be reimbursed by the MEDC.

**Main Street Oakland County & Placer AI**

Main Street Oakland County is in full support of this project, regardless of our selection. In the unlikely event that our MEDC grant match is less than anticipated, MSOC has a technical assistance grant fund of \$1,500 we can put toward this project if not another project like banner replacement. MSOC also has access to Placer AI. In short, this tool tracks cell phone data and allows us to identify where our residents and consumers moving through downtown are going and for what goods and services. For either contractor we select, this market and consumer behavior data access will be included into our Strategic plan at no cost because we are a member of Main Street.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the DDA approve the proposal provided by Pow! Strategies for a total of \$10,000 for the completion of a Downtown Strategic Plan.