

Downtown Development Authority of City of Madison Heights

Memorandum

Date: January 3, 2025

To: Downtown Development Authority Board Members

From: Giles Tucker, Community Development Director

Subject: ROW Property Acquisition- United Methodist Church Sign

At our November meeting I mentioned to the board that Nowak Fraus has completed its survey of the project area and that the United Methodist Church's existing property line is right up against the current location of the sidewalk. While it is possible to include on-street parking without additional ROW, doing so will match existing ROW on adjacent blocks and provide more room for pedestrian amenities. The included engineers exhibit developed by Nowak-Fraus shows a preferred property acquisition of ROW in front of the United Methodist Church (UMC). This acquisition would be 27 feet in from the existing property line for a total of 6,784 SF.

On Sunday November 24th I presented the 11 Mile Streetscape Plan to the congregation of the UMC. At the end of the presentation, I led a discussion of the proposed streetscape layout, included this exhibit, and asked the church if they would consider a mutually beneficial agreement to convey this additional ROW for the streetscape project.

The congregation expressed that the proximity of the sidewalk to the roadway makes it very difficult to maintain in the winter because plow trucks push all the snow onto the sidewalk. They also shared that their programmable sign is in disrepair and too expensive to fix. The streetscape project calls for the sidewalk to be further back from the road which will likely help mitigate the first issue they mentioned and if the DDA was to acquire the amount of ROW the engineers have suggested, the existing church sign would need to be moved anyway.

Following our meeting we asked Johnson Signs to meet with the Church and develop a quote for the replacement of the sign. A church representative from UMC that is responsible for real estate matters has indicated to me that they are in support of the project, and on Sunday January 5th the congregation will review the attached design to see if they are in favor of the new sign in exchange for granting the ROW.

The attached sign proposals and design was provided to us by the contractor that is being used for the City's gateway sign project. The difference between the two designs is that one of them includes a cabinet that allows for two lines of changeable copy for their sign for a total of \$18,000 a difference of \$750. Speaking with the contractor, these costs include the demolition of the old sign and the foundation work for the new one.

One significant cost not included is running new electrical conduit underground. The proposed location of the sign on the attached exhibit in black is where the engineer suggest we relocate the sign, but doing

so could add electrical costs of \$3,000- \$5,000. However, if the sign is moved straight back the sign contractor has suggested that they can use the existing underground conduit (which their licensing allows them to do) and thus avoid these added costs. Speaking with both the engineer this is not an issue, but the exact location of the sign will need to be narrowed down after both parties come to a general agreement.

Staff Recommendation:

Offering to purchase signage at the cost suggested in these proposals for the United Methodist Church is in the mutual benefit of the DDA's streetscape project and for the UMC. It is recommended that the DDA board authorize staff to pursue an agreement between the United Methodist Church and the DDA where the DDA agrees to pay for the construction of a new sign for the Church in exchange for granting the City of Madison Heights an additional 27ft of ROW.

If granted, staff would work with our City Attorney to develop all necessary agreements and land conveyance documents. Once signed, the DDA would either move forward with selecting a contractor for the project following the City's Purchasing Ordinances.