

Engineering Division of the Public Works Department

To: Alderperson Arnett & Commission Members
From: Andrew Beyer, P.E.
Date: May 26, 2026
Subject: Review and take possible action: Award 2028 Downtown Main Street Reconstruction Professional Real Estate Services Contract

Background

The Engineering Division prepared and advertised a Request for Proposals (RFP) for professional real estate acquisition services associated with the 2028 Downtown Main Street Reconstruction Project. The project corridor consists of Main Street (STH 19), from Church Street to Market Street, and is being completed in coordination with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT).

As Main Street is a connecting highway through the City of Watertown, WisDOT looks to local project sponsors (City) to pursue and acquire necessary real estate interests associated with project improvements. Based on correspondence with WisDOT, it is staff's understanding that professional services and fees associated with real estate acquisition are reimbursable to the City through the State/Municipal Financial Agreement (SMFA) for the project.

The project currently includes approximately 89 Temporary Limited Easements (TLEs). No permanent acquisition of private property is anticipated for the project at this time. The intent of the TLEs is to authorize the contractor to temporarily access adjacent private property to complete project improvements, including grading transitions, sidewalk and terrace tie-ins, and maintaining access to buildings abutting the public right-of-way during construction.

The City received two proposals from qualified firms for the requested services. Proposals were reviewed and ranked using the City's modified Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) process. Based on proposal review, project understanding, and relevant WisDOT acquisition experience, staff recommends contracting with the top-ranked firm, MSA Professional Services.

Project Scope

The proposed professional real estate services contract includes:

- Project and parcel preparation services
- Preparation of nominal payment parcel reports
- Negotiation services for Temporary Limited Easements
- Parcel closing and acquisition documentation
- Utility release of rights coordination
- Close-out documentation and file management
- Project management and coordination with WisDOT and City staff

The acquisition effort is anticipated to involve a significant amount of coordination with downtown businesses and property owners due to the constrained corridor and close proximity of buildings and site improvements to the public right-of-way. MSA Professional Services has indicated that they can meet all required project deadlines associated with real estate acquisition activities and project delivery.

Budget Goal

4. Involve those who are impacted before making decisions.
5. Encourage community growth by assessing opportunities, involving ALL stakeholders, environmental needs, modern code and policy priorities.

Financial Impact

The submitted cost proposal from MSA Professional Services is in the amount of \$168,875. Based on correspondence with WisDOT and the project delivery process for connecting highway projects, it is staff's understanding that eligible acquisition-related professional services are reimbursable to the City through the project SMFA.

The proposed cost includes project sales study services, nominal payment parcel reports, parcel negotiation and closing services, project management, and close-out documentation associated with all required temporary limited easements. The attached proposal and cost breakdown from MSA Professional Services are included for review.

Recommendation

The Public Works Department recommends awarding the contract for Professional Real Estate Services associated with the 2028 Downtown Main Street Reconstruction Project to MSA Professional Services in the amount not to exceed \$168,875. MSA demonstrated a strong understanding of WisDOT real estate acquisition procedures, downtown corridor coordination challenges, and project delivery requirements associated with WisDOT projects.

Potential Motion

Motion to award the Contract for Professional Real Estate Services for the 2028 Downtown Main Street Reconstruction Project to MSA Professional Services in an amount not to exceed \$168,875.