

Pitch for the Parcel

Final Call for Development Proposals:

The Hart Tax Increment Finance Authority (TIFA) is extending a final invitation to all interested parties to submit an application outlining their development vision for the property located at 408 S. State Street in Hart, Michigan. This site includes a church, residential home, and former nursery building, offering a unique opportunity for revitalization.

Following a review of all submissions, three applicants will be selected to present their proposals before the TIFA Board. One proposal will be chosen, and the selected applicant will be granted the opportunity to acquire the full property for \$1, contingent upon a commitment to meaningful redevelopment.

This is a rare opportunity to contribute to the next chapter of a historic property in the heart of Hart. Interested individuals or organizations are encouraged to **apply by April 10, 2025**.

BASIC INFO

Full Name

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Business or Organization Name (if applicable)

Proactive Investments Michigan LLC

Website or Social Media Links

VISION & PROPOSAL

Describe your idea or project in 1–2 paragraphs. (What would you do with the property if you win?) *

Our proposal outlines the conversion of the Congressional Church of Christ in Hart, Michigan into a for-profit, hybrid business comprising an event venue, a high-end bed and breakfast featuring recreational pickleball courts that will be available to local residents free of charge. The revitalized property will attract tourists, stimulate local commerce, and provide the community with high-quality gathering spaces, lodging, and activities. This transformation will also move the property from a tax-exempt status to a taxable entity, providing direct fiscal benefits to the City of Hart. As the church transitions from a nonprofit to a for-profit entity, it will contribute to the city's tax base, supporting schools, roads, and municipal services. The Tourism effect of an iconic attraction redeveloped in downtown Hart remains to be quantified, but every visitor will surely patronize local restaurants, shops, gas stations and tourist sites during their stay.

Which of the three buildings do you plan to use, and how? (Home, Church, Third Structure) *

Main Church Structure (Event Venue & Short-Term Rental)

Event Venue: Available for weddings, concerts, corporate retreats, graduation celebrations, Lions Club or UAW events and other private functions. The church's excellent acoustics and character make it a perfect space for memorable events. This space is ideal for hosting local music talents from around west Michigan. The lower level of the church is ideal for preparing food and other preparation services large gatherings might require.

Short-Term Group Rental: The spacious church sanctuary will be transformed into an elegant, energetic rental for large parties, family reunions, graduation parties, retreats and of course weddings. Architectural features like stained glass, vaulted ceilings, pews, and existing acoustics will be preserved to create an awe-inspiring experience. The upstairs will be converted into a more appropriate space for overnight short-term visitors who come to enjoy downtown Hart.

Potential Café Corner: Considerations may be made to try to add a small café that faces out to Johnson Street. A small café-style nook will be developed in the church lobby, offering coffee, pastries and light snacks with a walkup window we believe would be appreciated by the local downtown commuters. This promotes casual community gatherings and a cozy guest experience.

Second House Structure (Traditional Bed & Breakfast)

The nursery building is perfect for a classic, high-end B&B that will cater to tourists, especially those visiting Silver Lake Sand Dunes and surrounding attractions. This location has all the historic charm guests look for when seeking and Bed & Breakfast.

Themed rooms will reflect local history and the natural beauty of Hart. Our properties promote diversity and inclusion, welcoming everyone to come and enjoy what Downtown Hart has to offer. Breakfasts will feature locally sourced ingredients when possible. Focusing on healthy options in an effort to promote wellness. We will also be sensitive to dietary preferences.

The B&B will offer personalized guest experiences with concierge service. We will offer a shuttle service which provides transportation to and from the Silver Lake State Park attractions. We are considering opening this up to the greater Hart community charging \$1 for each ride in commemoration for the \$1 we paid for the church property.

Third Structure (Parking Lot & Recreational Area)

Half of the parking lot will be converted into pickleball courts, accessible free of charge to Hart residents, following the reservation model used at John Gurney Park.

The remaining space will be used for guest/event overflow parking. In our business we work hard to promote healthy lifestyles. Our goal is to support the community in providing communal space for people both young and old. Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the US. With a staggering 171.1% increase in participants from 2018 to 2022.

What is the potential community impact of your idea? (Who benefits? Does it provide a service, meet a need, or build a connection?) *

This idea will create opportunities for local landscaping vendors, maintenance personnel and repair technicians. We will need cleaning specialists to help with turnovers and full-time caretakers to help manage the property. All these are immediate impacts to local citizens and business owners. Tourism effect on the local economy is especially important to job growth. Every visitor who travels to visit the event center or stay at the B&B will surely patronize local restaurants, shops, gas stations and tourist sites during their stay. The residents will be able to enjoy free access to the pickleball court and our transportation shuttle that will travel to and from the state park attractions daily. Redeveloping an historic space like this and sharing with people will bring new visitors to downtown Hart. The property transition will immediately create a taxable asset for the city and give us an opportunity to promote active and healthy lifestyles in Hart.

ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

How would your project create jobs or support local employment? *

We have a list of local vendors we use on a regular basis all of those companies like Tanner Plumbing will add more accounts to their customer list. This property will create opportunities other for local landscaping vendors, maintenance personnel and repair technicians. We will need cleaning specialists to help with turnovers and full-time caretakers to help manage the property.

Would your project generate local tax revenue? If so, how? (E.g., as a business, rental property, venue, etc.) *

Yes, Our project will create tax revenue from two of the three assets. This transformation will also move the property from a tax-exempt status to a taxable entity, providing direct fiscal benefits to the City of Hart. As the church transitions from a nonprofit to a for-profit entity, it will contribute to the city's tax base, supporting schools, roads, and municipal services. The Tourism effect of an iconic attraction redeveloped in downtown Hart remains to be quantified, but every visitor will surely patronize local restaurants, shops, gas stations and tourist sites during their stay. The church will become an event venue which will be rented out and booked for special occasions or for over night large group stays. The second home structure will function as a traditional bed and breakfast. The parking lot will have no tax benefit only a community amenity that the city does not have to fund in their Parks and Rec budget.

How much will you need to invest to get the building(s) ready for your intended use? *

Church (amount & explanation), House (amount & explanation), 3rd Building (amount & explanation)

We have secured up to \$400,000 in case we need it from IBC Bank. Until we have the structures inspected, we our figures are only estimates. The exteriors of the buildings are in beautiful condition. We have already identified at least 100,000 in property improvements we plan to implement. We will off set that with some rental revenue from the 2025 summer season.

Do you have a financial plan or source of funding to support this idea? (If yes, briefly explain) *

Yes, Backup can be found in our Happy Hart Event Center and Inn Redevelopment plan proposal. We have secured \$400,000 from IBC Bank for the redevelopment efforts.

(Optional) would you like to offer the TIFA an additional amount to acquire the property? If so, how much?

I would be willing to donate \$25,000 to TIFA if selected. I would like to discuss the details if selected as a finalist.

FEASIBILITY & READINESS

What is your timeline for starting and completing the project? *

If awarded in April, we will start in April. We will need to with the city on permitting if any is needed. Our goal is to mobilize as soon as possible so we can try to capture some of the 2025 summer revenue.

What experience, skills, or team members do you have to bring this idea to life?

My experience now includes operating and maintaining assets in multiple states around the country. Eric's current portfolio consists of vacation rentals, land for development, Single family residents and long-term rental properties. As a property owner in Mears, he is familiar with the local tourist attractions that bring guests to Hart, Pentwater, and the surrounding community.

After retiring from the Detroit Lions as a player in the National Football League Eric began realizing value in the metro Detroit foreclosure market in 2010. Eric has been self-financing his real estate projects over the last fifteen years. The common theme is creating value for communities and bringing people together under one roof.

Eric Fowler has a Masters in Business Administration - Kelley School of Business, Indiana University. He is a Board member of the Sea Vista Condominiums on South Padre Island and is on the Business District Construction Review Board for the City of Hill Country Village.

Education

Bachelor Degree in Business Administration - Grand Valley State University

MBA - Kelley School of Business, Indiana University

My team is experiences with adding value and creating spaces that bring people together. Their bios and additional information are available in the proposal.

PITCH READINESS

Are you available to present a live, 5-minute pitch on April 15, 2025 at 1:00 PM? *

☒ Yes

☐ No

Do you have any presentation needs (AV, props, accessibility accommodations)? *

I can create a power point presentation if needed. We have created a 28 page redevelopment proposal for your review prior to the 5 minute pitch.

FINAL QUESTION

Why do you want to be part of this competition, and why does this property matter to you? *

I pride myself on bringing people together to create memories. I am born and raised in Michigan. I went to undergrad in Michigan, and I appreciate the summers and what West Michigan has to offer. Now that I have family spread all across the county, I realize how special the memories are when we gather people together. In all of my vacation rentals, I focus on 3 things. Bringing large groups together, specialty attractions and allowing large families to stay together on the same campus. I believe this opportunity provides me the opportunity to create something special for the family's who will come to visit Hart!

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