

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why is the project so important?

Empowerment Village is a response to the housing crisis for persons experiencing mental illness in our community and the absence of affordable supportive housing. The building that currently houses the Red Cross Homeless Outreach Program as a tenant, West Samaria, is closing. The Red Cross Program and its residents need a permanent location as soon as possible. Also, Our Space's current space is located in an older building that is too small for its current programming and does not allow for addition of new programs.

### 2. Will this project be taken off the tax rolls?

No, the parcel is currently not on the tax rolls and this development would be a taxable use.

### 3. Why was this site chosen?

Both Connection and Safety are critical to recovery. This site is connected to two county bus lines which is critical to access to shopping, medical, recreational and other needs. The site is only a block away from a stable residential neighborhood. The area has low crime which is key to serving a vulnerable population. The American Red Cross has been operating a homeless outreach program, Autumn West which is a safe haven for homeless individuals experiencing mental illness for more than 10 years. Autumn West has been located in a non-recovery oriented facility which is now closing and a new facility is essential. The site also offers multiple opportunities for recovery and gives the residents many venues to become involved with the community.

### 4. Were other sites considered?

The project team reviewed the inventory of more than 200 parcels owned by the city. This site is the only city-owned site that can accommodate this size of project that is south of I-94. Dozens of other privately owned lots were also considered and the only suitable lots cost in excess of \$500,000 and were not as good as the proposed site.

### 5. I thought this site was dedicated green space?

Not at all. In fact, the land is a former rail yard and requires significant environmental remediation. Neighbors have indicated that the site is currently being used for drug use and prostitution. The draft of the area's comprehensive plan is not yet available, and in the interim the City Plan Commission has approved the project and the City's planning staff has recommended approval.

### 6. I've heard something about Congestion Mitigation Act Funds (CMA Funds)

The city acquired nearly 3 miles of the old Chicago railway. In some areas the railway was very narrow, and in others, like the proposed site, there are wider areas of land. The city utilized CMA funds to acquire the railway land. The city attorney has issued an opinion letter that the development of Empowerment Village is a use consistent with those funds. More importantly, the development will fund the section of the bike path on the project site, the first committed source of funds to help pay for the bike path!

### 7. What will the economic benefit of the Project be?

The Project will bring approximately \$8.5 Million in investment to the area, largely from federal and other sources outside of the city. Construction will include a minimum of 20% Minority and Emerging Business Enterprise participation and use metro Milwaukee contractors. It is also estimated that 7 new jobs will be created as a result of the expanded programming.



## Empowerment Village

*Supportive Housing & Rehabilitation Center  
for persons experiencing mental illness.*

*A Collaboration of Our Space, Inc., American Red Cross  
Homeless Outreach Program & Cardinal Capital Management*



