



Developer Request for Proposals (RFP)



Zeeland Michigan: Multi-Story Downtown Infill Building at 303 East Main Avenue

INTRODUCTION



The City of Zeeland is seeking a qualified development partner to redevelop the City-owned property at 303 E. Main Avenue in downtown Zeeland, Michigan. The site occupies a prominent corner at Main Avenue and Centennial Street and represents a key opportunity for new investment in Zeeland’s historic downtown.

The City intends for the existing structure to be demolished and replaced with a high-quality, multi-story, mixed-use building. The project is expected to contribute to downtown vitality, expand commercial opportunities, and provide new residential or office space in the central business district.

The City encourages proposals that thoughtfully integrate with the surrounding neighborhood and contribute to the continued growth of downtown Zeeland.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 Development Opportunity	3
02 Site Context: Zeeland, Michigan	5
03 Site Vision	9
04 Development Process	10
05 Environmental Conditions	11
06 Market Conditions	12
07 Available Incentives	13
08 Selection Process and Criteria	14

01 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY



The **City of Zeeland** is seeking qualifications and development proposals from experienced development teams interested in purchasing and redeveloping the City-owned property located at 303 E. Main Avenue in downtown Zeeland. The site occupies a prominent corner at the intersection of Main Avenue and Centennial Street within the City's Central Business District.

The City is seeking proposals for a new development that may include retail, restaurant, service, office, and/or residential uses.

Site Summary

Address:	303 E. Main Avenue
Parcel Size:	Approximately 0.17 acres (approx. 75' x 100')
Current Use:	Former auto repair facility
Zoning:	C-2 Central Business District
Ownership:	City of Zeeland (through its Brownfield Redevelopment Authority)

Preferred Development Concept and Site Goals

The redevelopment of 303 E. Main Avenue represents a significant opportunity to enhance a highly visible and strategically important corner. The site serves as a key gateway within the City's central business district and offers the opportunity to reinforce the vitality, walkability, and character of downtown.

The City encourages development proposals that reflect the goals and vision established in the [City of Zeeland Downtown Vision Plan \(2018\)](#), which serves as the guiding framework for continued investment and revitalization in the downtown district. Interested development teams are strongly encouraged to become familiar with this plan and its recommendations for future development within downtown Zeeland.

Consistent with the Downtown Vision Plan, the City seeks development projects that represent True Zeel:

- Build on the City's FEEL THE ZEEL campaign and "fit" Downtown Zeeland with unique and dynamic solutions for particular building and marketing opportunities.
- Celebrate and build upon the community's authentic innovative and entrepreneurial roots.
- Have synergistic qualities that strengthen and complement the Downtown as a whole.
- Build upon and encourage an overall healthy mix of businesses and activities.
- Reflect the rich heritage and current personality of Downtown Zeeland.

To support these goals, the City encourages proposals that incorporate the following development characteristics:

- A multi-story building (2–3 stories preferred; up to 45 feet in height)
- Active ground-floor commercial space oriented toward Main Avenue
- Upper floors containing residential or office uses
- High-quality architectural design and durable materials, such as brick, stone, and glass
- Strong pedestrian orientation with active storefronts and street-facing entrances
- Integration with surrounding downtown buildings and streetscape
- To accommodate the expansion of the downtown snowmelt system, a development at 303 E. Main must include a 600 sq ft room to house the City's boiler system.



Developers are also encouraged to explore opportunities to incorporate adjacent parcels into a larger redevelopment, where feasible. The City recognizes that expanded redevelopment concepts that incorporate adjacent parcels may allow for a more impactful development. Development teams are encouraged to explore voluntary assemblage opportunities where property owners express interest.

RFP Response Deadline

Interested development teams are invited to submit their proposals by June 30, 2026; please refer to page 16 for submittal details.

02 SITE CONTEXT: ZEELAND, MICHIGAN



The City of Zeeland was founded in 1847 by Jannes Vande Luyster and named after the Province of Zeeland in the Netherlands. Today we still benefit from the rich heritage created by our early settlers.

Currently, the City of Zeeland has a resident population that hovers around 5,500. Zeeland citizens cherish their strong, safe neighborhoods, access to top rated public and private schools, unmatched City services, and every day good living. Zeeland continues to be recognized as a premier community in which to live, work and raise a family.

This small community swells each day as more than 12,000 employees commute to Zeeland to enter our local workforce. Zeeland has built an industrial reputation for innovation, quality manufacturing, and world-renowned products.

Zeeland's downtown district, the heart of the community, has witnessed tremendous growth in recent years. Significant public infrastructure improvements, alcohol ordinance changes and a surge in private investment has transformed a central business district that is current, competitive and eager to grow!

Zeeland's industrial and employment base continues to expand, with both long-standing employers and new advanced manufacturing firms making significant investments in facilities within the City. These projects are expected to bring additional high-quality jobs and workforce growth to the community, further supporting demand for housing, retail, dining, and services in downtown Zeeland.

FEEL THE ZEEL

The City defines ZEEL as:

1. Abundant enthusiasm that is unique to those in the City of Zeeland.
2. A passionate and spirited pursuit to be part of a big small town of everyday good living and unmatched enterprise.

If you want to FEEL THE ZEEL, then take a stroll down Main Street and visit any shop or diner where stories are made and shared. Visit any neighborhood where front porches are memory catchers and sidewalks are popular. Take a look at flourishing innovation, from home-grown flower shops to cutting edge industry. Find your favorite curb and settle in for any one of our annual parades. And join the stands full of fans, friends and family that support our local schools like each student is one of their own. The ZEEL is contagious and celebrated. And it's one-of-a-kind here in Zeeland. FEEL THE ZEEL!





Site Context Photographs

The following photographs depict the site's current condition and overall context.



303 E. Main aerial image.



303 E. Main aerial image with surrounding properties.



303 E. Main property from E. Main Avenue.



303 E. Main property looking east along the north side of E. Main Avenue.



303 E. Main property looking west along the north side of E. Main Avenue.



303 E. Main property looking east along the south side of E. Main Avenue.



303 E. Main property looking west along the south side of E. Main Avenue.

03 SITE VISION



The redevelopment of the 303 E. Main Avenue parcel may occur as a stand-alone project; however, the City recognizes that the most impactful redevelopment concept for this location will involve the incorporation of adjacent parcels. Several neighboring properties are currently occupied with residential uses and remain privately owned. While the City does not control these parcels, the City's Master Plan identifies these properties as appropriate for future Central Business District / commercial-oriented redevelopment due to their proximity to Main Avenue and the downtown core.

Development teams are encouraged to explore the potential for voluntary acquisition and assemblage of adjacent parcels as part of a larger redevelopment concept, should property owners express interest.



Any proposed development combining some or all of the identified properties above with the 303 E. Main property will be considered.

04 DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



Preferred Site Concepts

The City of Zeeland is initiating the property re-development process with this formal Request for Proposals (RFP). The entire re-development process will be guided by City Management and Planning staff members and the following current City documents, as approved by City Council.

Master Plan and Zoning

As outlined in the City's Master Plan, the City prioritizes mixed-use development at the 303 E. Main Avenue site, consisting of commercial and residential uses within a pedestrian-oriented environment that supports both downtown Zeeland and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Development at this location should be compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding area and incorporate architectural design elements that reflect Zeeland's traditional downtown character. Buildings should be oriented toward the street and create a strong visual presence at this prominent downtown corner.

Downtown Vision Plan:

[The City's Downtown Vision Plan \(2018\)](#) serves as the primary planning framework for the continued revitalization and development of downtown Zeeland. The plan outlines the community's goals for land use, building design, public spaces, and economic development within the downtown district.

The Downtown Vision Plan has been incorporated into the City's Master Plan and provides guidance for future development and redevelopment projects within downtown Zeeland. Development teams are encouraged to review the plan to better understand the City's vision and priorities for downtown.

Zoning

The property is located within the C-2 Central Business District. The C-2 district is intended to support a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented downtown environment by accommodating retail, service, and commercial uses that serve both residents and visitors. The district also encourages mixed-use development, with active commercial uses on the ground floor and office or residential uses located on upper floors.

Utilities

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Water/Sewer: | City of Zeeland, Jason Postma, (616)-772-6212 |
| • Electric: | City of Zeeland, Brian Coots, (616)-772-6212 |
| • Gas: | SEMCO Energy Gas Company, 1-800-624-2019 |
| • Streets, Storm Sewer and Right-of-Way: | City of Zeeland, Mike Schreur, (616)-772-6400 |
| • Sanitary Sewer: | City of Zeeland, Doug Engelsman, (616)-772-0873 |

Redevelopment Ready Community

The City of Zeeland is certified by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) as a Redevelopment Ready Essentials Community. The MEDC has recognized that the City's development regulations and processes are up-to-date, clear, and predictable, as determined by the MEDC's external assessment.

05 ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS



The City of Zeeland has completed Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) for the 303 E. Main Avenue property. Copies of these reports are available for review by interested development teams upon request.

Developers should conduct their own due diligence as part of the development process and may choose to perform additional environmental investigations as needed.

The City anticipates that the existing structure on the site will be demolished prior to redevelopment. The City is willing to work collaboratively with the selected developer to explore available incentive programs and funding opportunities that may assist with demolition, site preparation, and any necessary environmental remediation activities.

06 MARKET CONDITIONS



Retail/Commercial Market Potential

Downtown Zeeland has experienced significant reinvestment and growth over the past decade, supported by both public infrastructure improvements and private development activity.

The City has invested more than \$9.4 million in public infrastructure projects that have improved connectivity, public spaces, and the overall downtown experience. Notable improvements include the downtown splash pad park, public restroom facilities, an outdoor fireplace, Elm Street Park, and the snowmelt system incorporated into the Elm Street Woonerf. The City has also completed the Library Alley project and Cherry Street sidewalk and landscaping improvements, which better connect the south downtown parking lot and library to businesses along Main Avenue.

In 2023–2024, the City expanded its downtown snowmelt system, installing four blocks of heated sidewalks and crosswalks along Main Avenue between State Street and the Community Restaurant. The 303 E. Main Avenue site is located within this expanded snowmelt district. The City has also recently completed a Snowmelt Master Plan that envisions expanding the snowmelt system to additional areas of downtown.

Private investment has accompanied these public improvements. Over the past decade, downtown Zeeland has seen more than \$25.6 million in private investment, including building rehabilitations, upper-floor residential conversions, and several new infill developments.

Recent redevelopment projects include the rehabilitation of the 81,000 square-foot Sligh Furniture building into 48 market-rate apartments, which has helped establish the Main Avenue and Maple Street intersection as a prominent eastern gateway to downtown. Additional recent projects include a new mixed-use building at the corner of Main Avenue and State Street, which includes commercial space and 22 residential units, as well as another mixed-use development in the center of the primary downtown block featuring new commercial space, eight residential units, and a partially open-air, snowmelted pedestrian passage connecting downtown parking to Main Street.

As new and improved commercial spaces have entered the market, downtown Zeeland has seen increasing rental rates and strong tenant demand. Newly revitalized residential units are being absorbed by the area's growing population, indicating continued demand for additional housing opportunities within downtown.

Downtown Zeeland continues to serve as a central gathering place for residents and visitors, supported by a year-round calendar of community events such as PumpkinFest, concerts, markets, parades, and holiday celebrations. The establishment of Zeeland's Social District in 2021 has further strengthened the downtown hospitality environment by allowing patrons to enjoy outdoor seating and flexible dining experiences across multiple establishments.

Additional information about downtown Zeeland events and activities can be found at feelthezeel.com.

07 AVAILABLE INCENTIVES



The City of Zeeland is committed to partnering with the selected development team to facilitate a successful redevelopment of the 303 E. Main Avenue property. A variety of local and state incentive programs may be available to support eligible redevelopment activities. Potential programs include:

- **Public Act 210 – Commercial Rehabilitation Exemption** (if reactivated)
- **Public Act 255 – Commercial Facilities Exemption** (if reactivated)
- **Brownfield Redevelopment Plan**, including potential use of Housing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) where applicable

These programs may be used to help reduce the tax burden associated with new investment and, in certain cases, may also help leverage additional grant funding opportunities through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and other state programs.

The City has previously partnered with developers and the MEDC to successfully obtain and administer grant funding for redevelopment projects within the downtown district and is open to working collaboratively with the selected developer to explore similar opportunities where appropriate.

Development Liquor License

The 303 E. Main Avenue property is located within the City’s alcohol overlay district and may be eligible to pursue a Redevelopment Liquor License through the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC), subject to City approval. Given the site’s location and surrounding uses, any request for a liquor license would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in coordination with the City and MLCC.

The property is not currently located within Downtown Zeeland’s Social District; however, if desired by the selected developer, the City may consider supporting the extension of the Social District to include this property, subject to the applicable review and approval processes.

The City is open to discussing additional partnership opportunities or development tools that may help facilitate a high-quality redevelopment project at this location.

08 SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA



The City of Zeeland will review and evaluate all complete proposals submitted in response to this RFP to identify qualified development teams for the redevelopment of the property located at 303 E. Main Avenue. Development teams responding to this RFP must include the following information in their submission:

- **Letter of Interest** – Provide a letter (up to three pages) identifying the development team and summarizing the team’s vision and overall approach for the redevelopment of the site.
- **Proposed Purchase Price** – Provide a proposed purchase price for the property in its “as-is” condition, subject to typical contingencies such as inspections, environmental assessments, and planning approvals.
- **Development Experience / Portfolio** – Provide a description of past projects completed by the development team that demonstrate experience with projects of a similar nature. Examples may include urban infill development, redevelopment of former commercial or service sites, or projects located in emerging redevelopment areas. Include project descriptions, development costs, completion dates, and references.
- **Experience with Development Incentives** – If the proposal anticipates the use of public incentive programs, describe the development team’s experience working with local, state, or federal redevelopment incentives on comparable projects.
- **Financial Capacity** – Provide evidence demonstrating the development team’s financial capacity to undertake and complete the proposed project.
- **Development Team Information** – Provide resumes or background information for the firm and key team members who will be involved in the project.
- **Marketing and Leasing Strategy** – Describe the proposed strategy for marketing the completed development, including plans for attracting and securing appropriate commercial tenants.
- **Development Concept and Site Plan** – Provide a conceptual development proposal for the site, including building concepts, architectural influences, and preliminary renderings or site plans illustrating the proposed project. Proposals should address the development considerations outlined in the following section.
- **Prospective Tenant Information** – Provide real or conceptual plans for commercial tenants and how those tenants will compliment downtown Zeeland.

The City of Zeeland reserves the right to request additional information from proposers during the evaluation process.



Highly Recommended Elements and Considerations

- Ability to secure adjacent parcels and fold them into the project
- Multi-story building – (up to 45' in height + exceptions)
- Elevator
- Private project funding and completion within 2 years
- Mixed-use – Retail, residential, service, restaurant, office
- Selected tenants that complement the existing fabric of the downtown business community
- Quality building design complementing the adjacent urban context
- Quality building materials including brick, stone and transparent glass
- Oriented towards Main Avenue
- Zero lot line setbacks
- On-site parking to meet expected market needs or secured off-site parking
- Maximize commercial space density with varying sized units
- 600 sq ft room to accommodate City's boiler system

Additional Potential Elements and Considerations

- 2 Story building
- Experience navigating public grant financing to supplement private financing
- 2-3 Year project completion
- List of committed and potential commercial tenants
- On-site parking to meet partial needs, or participation in shared downtown parking solutions, including potential contribution toward additional public parking capacity.
- 600 sq ft room to accommodate City's boiler system

The City will NOT consider Proposals that include the following elements

- Single story building
- Low quality building materials
- Projects that do not have Main Ave facing orientation
- Projects that do not include any parking or participation in shared/public parking solutions
- Projects that do not include 600 sq ft boiler room for downtown snowmelt system



RFP Evaluation Process

This Request for Proposals (RFP), and any responses submitted by developers, shall not be considered a legally binding agreement.

Following review of the submitted proposals, the City may contact and meet with one or more qualified development teams to further discuss their proposals and negotiate potential development terms. The City may subsequently enter into a pre-development agreement or other development-related agreement with a selected team, which may address items such as purchase price, due diligence period, development schedule, and other mutually agreed-upon terms and conditions.

Proposal Format

Six (6) printed proposals and a PDF version shall be submitted by **June 30, 2026, by 5:00pm**, to:

Abby deRoo, City Marketing Director
Zeeland City Hall
21 S. Elm Street
Zeeland, MI 49464
aderoo@cityofzeeland.com

Schedule for Review and Selection

The schedule for receipt and evaluation of proposals is anticipated to be as follows:

RFP posted:	May 5, 2026
Deadline for proposals:	June 30, 2026
Evaluation and negotiation period:	July 1 – July 30, 2026
Next Steps:	TBD

Contacts / Questions

Questions may be directed to:

Abby deRoo, City Marketing Director
(616)-748-5906
aderoo@cityofzeeland.com

Tim Maday, Community Development Director
(616)-772-0872
tmaday@cityofzeeland.com