

VISION TEAM

Team Members: Ruth Bonfiglio, Charlie Eastham (chair), Nancy Haley, Jamie Sharp, Dick Siefers, Gordon Strayer, Al and Betty Thomas, Mike Van Meter.

The Vision Team was established in August, 2000. Our charge has been to lead the congregation in a planning process to consider options for growth, programming, and building expansion. A complete report of our activities through May, 2003, can be found in the Annual Reports for 2002 and 2003.

On May 4, 2003, the congregation voted in favor of the following:

"I support the Vision Team's exploration of land purchase options, including sites in the downtown Iowa City area. I understand that any decision regarding the purchase of land must be brought to the congregation for a majority vote. I further understand that any recommendation brought to the congregation with respect to any land purchase is only one of several decisions and votes to be made with respect to the Society's home in the future."

Carrying forward with that decision the Vision Team began a process of investigating potential building locations. We reviewed site selection criteria from the UUA and other denominations and adopted these guidelines to assist us in our work.

A site location should be convenient; it should be accessible to current and future members.

A location that is prominent and readily visible from major thoroughfares is preferable.

The elevation should be the same or greater than surrounding land.

Side streets and heavy commercial traffic are not desirable.

~~Flat or gently sloped areas have a higher interest.~~

There should be sufficient flat area for 20-30,000 of building space plus 80-100 parking spaces.

Close proximity to existing residential development is favorable.

An area that is rectangular or square is preferable over triangular or irregular shapes.

Availability of public transportation is a consideration.

A location's relationship to residential patterns of the current congregation will be evaluated.

Proximity to "growth edges" in this area is a factor.

Availability of public infrastructure, streets and utilities, is a consideration affecting price.

Size: Minimum size should be 3-4 acres. Up to 10 acres probably represents a very comfortable upper range providing for foreseeable future needs. Larger parcels could be considered depending upon feasible resale prospects.

Price: A final sale price consistent with current market experience is assumed.

We sent letters to some 13 local realtors stating that we were actively looking for potential building sites meeting these criteria. We then began to explore and obtain information on a number of possible locations of which team members were aware as well as specific locations recommended to us by members of the congregation.

As of this report we have investigated the following possible locations:

- 2949 Rochester, just west of Amhurst - 2.1 acres (two parcels); ongoing discussions with owners about interest in selling part or all.
- Northeast corner of First Avenue and Rochester - 4.1 acres; priced by owner at \$525,000.
- St. Marks United Methodist Church, 2675 E. Washington.
- Sand Hill Estates (a Southgate development), south on Gilbert St. at current city limits.
- 8 acre outlot, zoned interim development; priced by Southgate at \$150,000/acre.
- Seabury and Smith Building, Northgate Drive (Hwy. 1 North of I-80) - commercial building; listed at \$1,750,000.
- Dane Road south past 218; well past city limits - 22 acres listed at \$240,000.
- 70 acres northeast of Taft Avenue and Lower West Branch Road; option held by St. Marks north of Foster Road and fronting on I-80. 32 acres, no partial sale, no arterial street access.

- Rohret Road (south) and Duck Creek Drive – 14 acres, \$700,000; set back from Rohret, accessed by 70' wide lane; this site was considered, but not chosen by First Christian Church.
- East of Scott Blvd. and north of Lower West Branch Road; owned by Plum Grove Acres between Camp Cardinal Road and Deer Creek Road; owned by Southgate.
- Several parcels along Scott Blvd. extended, between its intersection with Rochester and First Avenue.
- North of E. Court and Arlington Drive; owned by Gary Watts and John Moreland between E. Court and Lower West Branch Road; owned by Southgate.
- Washington Park, north of Elks Club.
- North side of Rohret Road past Korean Methodist Church.
- South of Melrose and west of MacBride Road – Cameron property; no response to letter.
- West side of First Avenue, north from Hickory Trail; about 40 acres, not for sale.
- Part of Idyllwild subdivision to the east.
- Site for future condominiums north of Rochester and east of Scott Blvd., 33.3 acres.
- Four parcels north of Muscatine or American Legion Road, near its intersection with Scott Blvd. – owner's representative stated no interest in selling.

We plan to continue the process of assessing possible sites, including locations in Coralville and others north of I-80, until we are able to return to the Board and congregation with feasible recommendations as to future locations.