

To: Howard Lazarus, City Administrator
From: Susan Pollay, DDA Executive Director
Date: 12 September 2017
Re: Suicide Prevention in the Parking Structures

This memo is intended to provide an update about DDA efforts to address suicide prevention in the public parking structures.

In 2016 the IPI (International Parking Institute) released a report titled [Suicide in Parking Facilities: Prevention, Response and Recovery](#) that described evolving best practices in the parking industry. The report cited data from the CDC that in 2014 there were 42,773 deaths by suicide, of which roughly 2% of these deaths were caused by jumping or falling. This includes bridges, as well as parking structures, and most of these parking facilities are associated with the Veterans Administration (VA) and other hospitals, and universities. The report outlined prevention measures, such as physical barriers (fencing and screening) and signage.

In November 2016 DDA staff met with representatives from Carl Walker Inc. (CWI) to discuss suicide prevention in parking structures. Gary Cudney, a Senior Vice President at Carl Walker Inc., had been part of the IPI group that assembled the report, and he shared information and photos from other parking systems. It was helpful to see what steps other communities had taken, and to learn about options for the Ann Arbor system. At this meeting, it was decided that the DDA would explore three elements; signage, management and fencing.

Signage

To develop language for signage, DDA staff received direction from Washtenaw County Mental Health and VA Hospital staff. The signs include phone numbers for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, Psychiatric Emergency Services, and Ozone House. In April 2017, eighty signs were purchased and hung at rooftop levels of the structures.

Management

To address rooftop management, the DDA and Republic Parking reaffirmed the policy of zero tolerance for loitering on structure rooftops. Republic Parking staff

pursue all instances where people are not actively walking to or from their vehicles.

Fencing

DDA staff worked with CWI to develop a plan for fencing. Key issues included how tall the fence should be, on what levels the fence should be placed, what material should be used (durability and maintenance considerations), and how the fencing should be attached.

CWI had previously been hired as the engineers for the installation of fencing on top of parking structures in Grand Rapids. In a proposal dated January 5, 2017 CWI outlined a bid process and estimated the cost to fabricate and install fencing on the rooftops of the six above ground Ann Arbor parking structures to be \$369,500.

On January 9, the DDA accepted the proposal and CWI went to work preparing bid documents and specifications. Ten fencing companies were solicited, however only two contractors attended the pre-bid meeting June 9, 2017. On June 19, 2017 only one bid, in the amount of \$1,386,446.61, was received. The DDA asked that CWI follow up with the two companies that attended the pre-bid meeting. The company that chose not to submit a bid said they currently had as much work as they could handle. The company that did bid explained that they had a full schedule and that fencing costs had gone up.

Because the only bid received was over a million dollars higher than the engineer's estimate, the DDA reached out to a restoration contractor regularly hired by the DDA to see if they could bid on the job. Their estimated cost was just under \$3M, with most of the cost in the fencing.

All parties involved seem to feel that the fencing companies in Southeast Michigan currently had too much work to bid new projects. This included not only work on private developments, but also big projects such as the Little Caesar's Arena in Detroit. Given this response, the project will be rebid again this winter to see if the bidding climate may have cooled enough to encourage more competitive bidding.

Please contact me if I can answer any questions.