

### STAFF REPORT

Date: February 25, 2025  
To: Thom Sheridan, City Manager  
From: Katie Behnke, Economic Development Manager  
CC: Brian Griffith, Assistant City Manager  
Greg Hannan, Community Development Director  
Re: 996 Hines Hill Road Phase I Cultural Resources Study

#### **Background**

JobsOhio manages the SiteOhio program to vet commercial properties, business parks, and industrial sites to certify they are construction ready. Site authentication requires a “comprehensive analysis and guarantees that all utilities are to the property with adequate capacity, that due diligence studies have been completed, and that all state and federal entities have provided concurrence with the studies. SiteOhio authentication also ensures the site is free of incompatible uses, with no limitations or insurance liability based on surrounding properties. Many of the sites have highway access and rail access on site.<sup>1</sup>”

JobsOhio refers prospects to authenticated sites first as those sites are known to be shovel ready. Therefore, certified sites experience more leads and have a greater chance for development. As of October 2024, there are only twenty-three SiteOhio Authenticated Sites and only five within the Northeast Region. None of the Northeast sites are in Summit, Portage, or Cuyahoga Counties. Achieving this certification would give 996 Hines Hill Road a distinct advantage in the geographic region.

Staff submitted the city-owned 170 acres at 996 Hines Hill Road to Wave Five of this program in October 2023. The site was selected to advance through multiple rounds of the program culminating in a site visit and mock client presentation in October 2024. Following this visit, Staff was provided with a list of action items that are required to be completed by November 2025 to be eligible for certification, including a completed Phase I Cultural Resources Study with State Historic Preservation Office Concurrence Letter.

#### **Phase I Cultural Resources Study**

Phase I Cultural Resources Study is an archeological survey of the site which documents any historic resources to be considered prior to site development. The scope of this study includes the following to determine if there may be archeologically sensitive or significant areas on the site:

- Review of the National Register of Historic Places,
- Review of any buildings greater than fifty years old,
- Review of historical aerial photographs,

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<sup>1</sup> JobsOhio. “SiteOhio Certified Sites.” <https://www.jobsohio.com/en/programs-services/sites/available-sites>. Accessed 28 October 2024.

- Subsurface testing and visual inspection onsite during fieldwork,
- Compilation of study report, and
- Preparation of State Historic Preservation Office submission materials and coordination of Concurrence Letter.

### **Consultants Reviewed**

As the technical expertise required to complete a Phase I Cultural Resources Study is beyond what can be completed by Staff, four firms were engaged to discuss the project. Staff found all four consultants to have appropriate levels of expertise to complete the project. The respective quotes are listed below.

#### **Consultant Quotes Obtained:**

EMH&T Engineers, Surveyors, Planners, Scientists: \$35,000

Lawhon & Associates, Inc.: \$47,000

Stone Environmental, Engineering & Science: \$50,000

Terracon: \$59,500

### **Summary**

As all four firms are qualified to complete the study, Staff recommends that the most cost-effective firm, EMH&T, be engaged to complete the work.

As with other professional services contracts staff is requesting a 10% contingency to handle any minor changes in the scope of services that may occur during the course of the study. The 10% amount would be \$3,500 for a total contract cost of \$38,500. For considerations in excess to this amount, staff will return to the City Council.