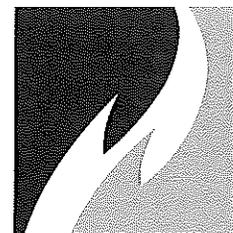




ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE /  
FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY  
JOINT NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Ferris State University Will Not Develop Kent County's 82 Ionia NW**

**GRAND RAPIDS** – Last year, Kent County received three bids to purchase the County building at 82 Ionia NW, at the corner of Ionia and Fountain in downtown Grand Rapids. After selecting the proposal by neighboring Ferris State University/Kendall College of Art and Design (FSU/KCAD) as the high bidder, the County and the University agreed to allow an additional amount of time for FSU/KCAD to evaluate the building for its potential for student housing and student life activities. After much consideration and assessment, FSU/KCAD has determined they will not be able to use the building as intended and will not be completing the purchase.

After extensive study and analysis, the University found the design of the building does not allow for renovation in a way that would meet their needs. "We are disappointed," said KCAD President Leslie Bellavance. "The property was well situated for use by the college, so it was my hope that these challenges could be overcome. However, we remain interested in exploring other avenues to develop affordable housing for our students." The KCAD campus currently includes the 17 Fountain St. NW Building, the Woodbridge N. Ferris Building (the former Federal Building at 17 Pearl St. NW) and the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts at 2 Fulton West.

The County Administrator's Office will study its next steps, which could include re-issuing the Request for Proposals (RFP). "We are appreciative of the process and due diligence put forth by the FSU/KCAD team," said Daryl Delabbio, Kent County Administrator/Controller. "We believe the commercial real estate market is very strong in Grand Rapids. Two other developers responded to the initial RFP, and in recent months, additional developers have expressed interest in the building. As a result, re-issuing the RFP would be the appropriate next step to take."

The County and Progressive A&E completed a study in 2015 of all County-owned or leased property, finding some buildings were not being used to their fullest potential. Currently, just over half the space in 82 Ionia is occupied. Kent County Friend of the Court, Circuit Court Probation, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office and Community Housing and Development are currently housed in the building.

As a college within Ferris State University, Kendall College of Art and Design prepares students for leadership in the visual arts, design, art history, and art education; provides innovative, collaborative education that fosters growth and individual creativity; and promotes the ethical and civic responsibilities of arts and designers, locally and globally.

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