



COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF AMERICA

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July 30, 2024

City of La Crosse
Planning and Development Department
Attn: Tim Acklin, Planning Manager
acklint@cityoflacrosse.org

RE: Petition for a Planned Development District – 510 9th Street S

Dear Tim,

It is the intent of Commonwealth Development Corporation of America and the Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development to submit a Rezoning Petition for a Planned Development District for the property at **510 9th Street South** (former Lincoln Middle School), based upon planning staff feedback as it relates to the project's incorporation of non-profit community service-oriented office space.

1. Area: The total land area of the parcel is 2.066 acres. As the site is an existing development (Lincoln Middle School), there will be no ground disturbance on locations in which previous disturbance had not already occurred. The limited ground disturbance to occur will include trenching for new utility lines (water, sewer, gas, electric). Site changes will primarily include transition of the current playground area to approximate 53 stall parking area with landscaping and bicycle parking. There will be no change in open (non-building) space, which is currently .97 acres representing 46.1% of the site. There will be less impervious SF to the site's pervious green space land area total, which is currently .36 acres representing 17.7% of the site.

The proposed use of the land is a medium density residential with accompanying community service facility light office/administrative use. Residential density with 51 units (1, 2, and 3 bedroom) is 1765 square feet per family, which exceeds R5 minimum of 1500 square feet per family and is minimally shy of the R4 minimum of 1800 per family. Actual gross residential building space will total 48,374 square feet, which is 53.9% of the site. Community service space will total 1,290 square feet, which is 1.4% of the site.

Populations served by the residential development will be households earning between 30% and 80% of area median income (AMI). Qualifying households will have approximate incomes between \$20,670 (one-bedroom 30% AMI unit) and \$85,040 (three-bedroom 80% AMI unit), based upon 2024 data.

Municipal services will include those available to multifamily residential parcels, including water and sewer, and if provided, trash and energy (if not provided, these services will be coordinated with the appropriate 3rd party providers).

The project will be completed in accordance with historic preservation requirements, maintaining the integrity of the historic landmark. Primary exterior-visible building improvements will include replacing existing windows, tuckpointing existing brick, and replacing existing membrane roofing.

Improvements are closely guided and monitored by the U.S. National Parks Service and the WI State Historical Society.

2. Value of Improvements: An appraisal has not yet been completed, and due to past public use and correlating tax exemption, a real estate assessment is also unavailable. Total costs of the adaptive reuse project are estimated at \$22,557,030 and include the following:
 - a. Land and Buildings: \$ 2,200,000
 - b. Construction / Hard Costs: \$ 15,593,900
 - c. Design/Engineering: \$ 797,000
 - d. Financing / Soft Costs / Fees: \$ 3,966,130
3. Organization: The project will be developed by Commonwealth Development Corporation of America and the nonprofit Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development (WPHD). An owner LLC entity will be created for the project serving as a partnership entity of WPHD, Commonwealth, and the tax credit equity investor (unknown at this stage).
4. Proposed Departures/Waivers: Parking, setbacks, and use, including the inclusion of a community service facility, which primarily entails office space coordinated in partnership with the County to provide life-improvement services to residents within the development and greater neighborhood. The development and design team will work closely with city staff regarding all use requirements and necessary waivers. Attached is an overview of the intended community service uses as provided by La Crosse County.
5. Dates: Appropriate zoning is needed to be in place by December 2024 affirming the use and density are allowed, to be included as a required component of the project's Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority 2025 Housing Tax Credit Program application. Tax credit awards are expected May 2025. The project will work through specific zoning / site approvals and permitting with the city May through end of 2025. Also during that period, the project will secure financial sources. Closing and start of construction activity is expected to be December 2025, with a 16-month construction period. Leasing activities are expected to begin Spring 2026.
6. Sketch Plan: See attached proposed site plan.
7. Legal Description: Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 in Block 7 of Stevens Addition to La Crosse. Also the vacated North-South alley running through said Block 7. *[per recorded Quit Claim Deed Doc# 956043 dated 10/16/1984]*
8. Neighborhood Compatibility: The school facility is an existing defining feature of the neighborhood, with this adaptive reuse project ensuring long-term, continued prominence. The immediate neighborhood surrounding the site (1-block) includes a mix of single family, duplex, and multifamily residential housing. The broader neighborhood (2-3 blocks) includes residential, public service type facilities (Mayo Clinic, Coulee Recovery Center, Community Gardens, Viterbo University, FSPA, and American Legion). Also within the neighborhood is Stoffel Court, a 74-unit affordable housing apartment community, and Becker Plaza, a 75-unit affordable housing apartment community, both of which are managed by the La Crosse Housing Authority.

Long-range land use within the neighborhood supports medium density housing, while city planning documentation supports the adaptive reuse of historic assets within the community.

The Washburn neighborhood plan states the following action item: “The City will work with the neighbors to research all available options for tax credits and financial incentives related to the rehabilitation of quality older structures in the neighborhood” (pg 31), affirming the importance that the neighborhood’s historical assets play in the neighborhood identity.

9. Floor Plans: See attached plan set.
10. Soil Characteristics: Soil assessment has not yet occurred and will primarily only be assessed where the current playground exists, to ensure adequate support for the proposed parking lot.
11. Topography: The parcel is flat/level, as shown by the USGS Topography map excerpt below (2022, Scale 1:24000). The full USGS Topography Map for this region is attached.



12. Landscaping: A code-compliant landscaping plan will be developed in coordination with city planning staff. The project will include landscaped parking lot with trees, shrubbery, and garden plantings. In addition, wherever possible the project will incorporate terrace trees, including preservation of current terrace trees as able. The project also will maintain the existing garden and tree installation located at the northeast corner of the parcel.

Thank you for this opportunity to work together on the preservation of this important community resource while also creating new affordable housing.

Tyler Sheeran
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cc. *Patricia Sprang, Executive Director of Business Services, School District of La Crosse*