

**CITY OF LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN  
CITY PLAN COMMISSION  
REPORT  
April 29, 2019**

➤ **AGENDA ITEM – 18-1196 (Andrea Schnick)**

Amended Resolution declaring Wittenberg Park as surplus property and authorizing a request for proposals process for development of the parcel.

➤ **ROUTING:** F&P

➤ **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Wittenberg Park became a city of La Crosse park in 1978 through a land swap with the Housing Authority of La Crosse and the City of La Crosse Board of Park Commissioners. Due to the high crime in the area and overall low utilization, the request to declare the property surplus is the first step in a plan for redevelopment of the area.

To address housing needs in our community redevelopment could include senior or workforce housing as well as housing for those displaced by redevelopment of developed areas in the floodplain which have been affected by National Flood Insurance Policy while enhancing park/green space as an improved neighborhood amenity. There are several large employers nearby with Kwik Trip being within a mile and all of the businesses in the Interstate Industrial Park. In addition, we anticipate seeing development along the nearby Highway 53 corridor which could create a further demand for housing in this part of the city. Through the development of the request for proposals, several environmental and neighborhood issues will be addressed, including necessary fill for development (estimated to require 6' throughout most of the site, bringing the park to be the same level as the current shelter and nearby Housing Authority Development), transportation access (sidewalks, MTU bus stops, access to bike/walking trail), and stormwater impact and wetland mitigation.

In accordance with Ordinance 4838, after the property is declared surplus by the Common Council, a request for proposals will be widely distributed and a "For Sale" sign with contact information will be located on the property for minimum of (10) consecutive days. The sale price of the land is to be determined by the City Assessor or a third party appraisal unless the property sale is part of an application for City assistance through the EDC; then the sale price shall be determined by the residual land value method.

At the request of the Plan Commission and the Common Council, a Request for Expressions of Interest was sent on March 15 to 125 regional developers with a deadline of April 15. Staff received one response from Gorman/Cinnaire which indicated that in the current state, this park is not an attractive redevelopment option. Staff also did due diligence regarding environmental requirements of the site.

➤ **GENERAL LOCATION:**

Near the intersection of Hamilton and Tyler Streets, to the south of I-90. Logan Northside Neighborhood Association, Common Council District 1. To the west of the railroad tracks and the Interstate Industrial Park.

➤ **RECOMMENDATION OF OTHER BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:**

Amended resolution approved by the Board of Park Commissioners 10/18/18.

The resolution was referred by the Plan Commission at the 10/29/18 meeting with instructions for staff to complete a Request for Expressions of Interest and an Environmental Assessment. This referral was approved by the Common Council on 11/8/18.

➤ **CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:**

The 2002 Future Land Use Map identifies this parcel as parks & conservancy, which would be inconsistent with this use. However, other sections of the Comprehensive Plan address the issues that would be compatible with development.

Tab 4 of the Plan Elements (Land Use) generally, but specifically these objectives:

Objective 2: Targeted Redevelopment on page 4-6 –redevelopment and reinvestment priority in distressed neighborhoods.

Objective 3: Compact and Contiguous Growth on page 4-6 – accommodate new development on the fringe and not impact sensitive environmental resources

Objective 7: Improve Land Use Compatibility on page 4-7 – redeveloped so-called underutilized property

Objectives 11: Resource Protection & 14: Urban Ecology on page 4-7– could be sustainable urban development and embrace natural features

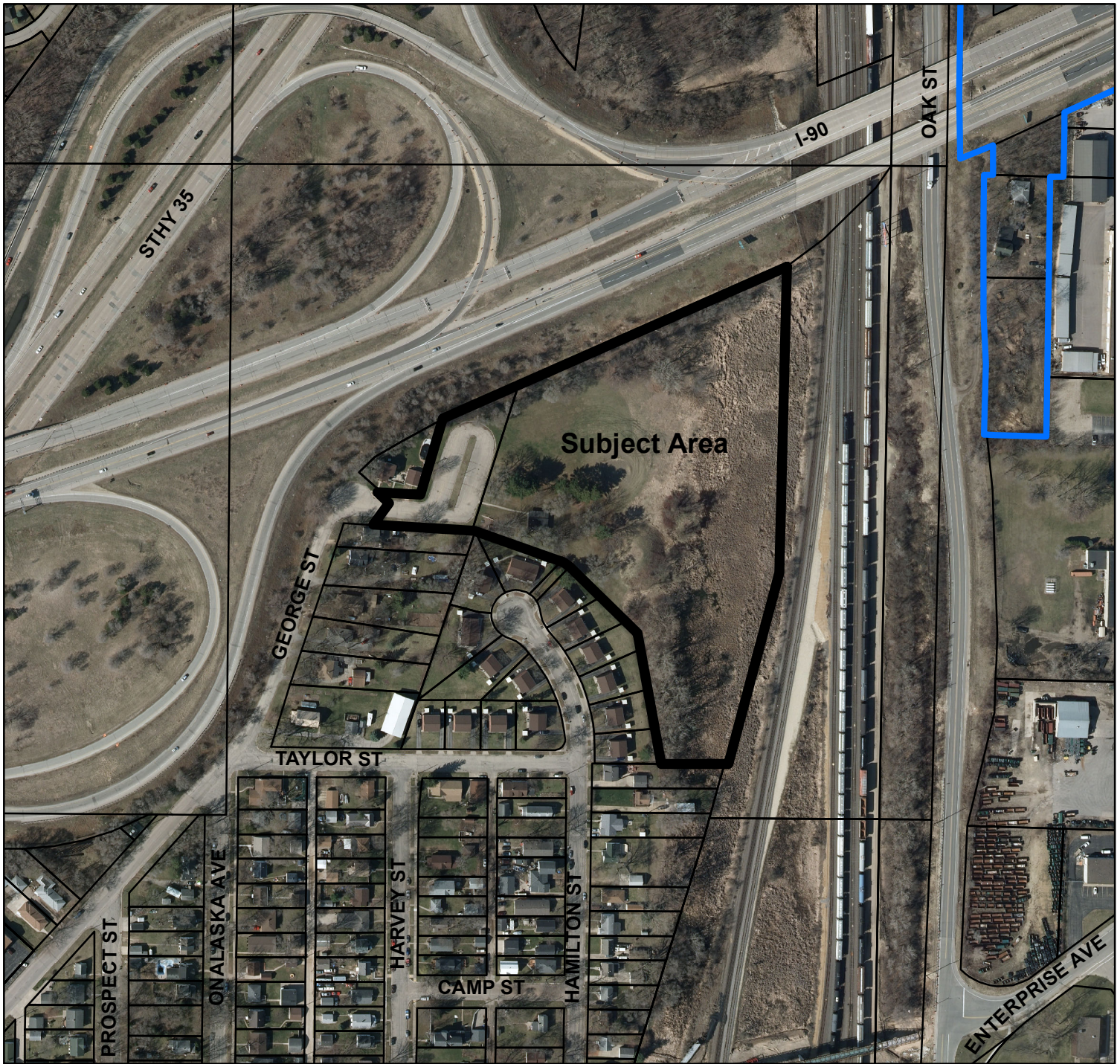
Tab 7 of the Plan Elements (Parks, Recreation and Open Space) generally, but specifically this objective:

Objective 7: Sale of Land on page 7-18, 1.a. “revenue for said sale will allow the creation of more park/open space land in areas where need is greater.” Revenue will be used to improve other north side parkland.



















➤ **PLANNING RECOMMENDATION:**

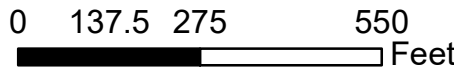
Due to the lack of response from interested developers and the anticipated cost to redevelop the site and neighborhood to make this an attractive redevelopment site and concerns raised as part of staff discussions with a WI DNR Hydrogeologist relative to fill and high ground water, **Planning staff recommends denial of the resolution.** Staff requests support from the Council to explore options to deal with the underutilization of this area and the subsequent high crime, such as working with the Housing Authority of the City of La Crosse and WisCorps.



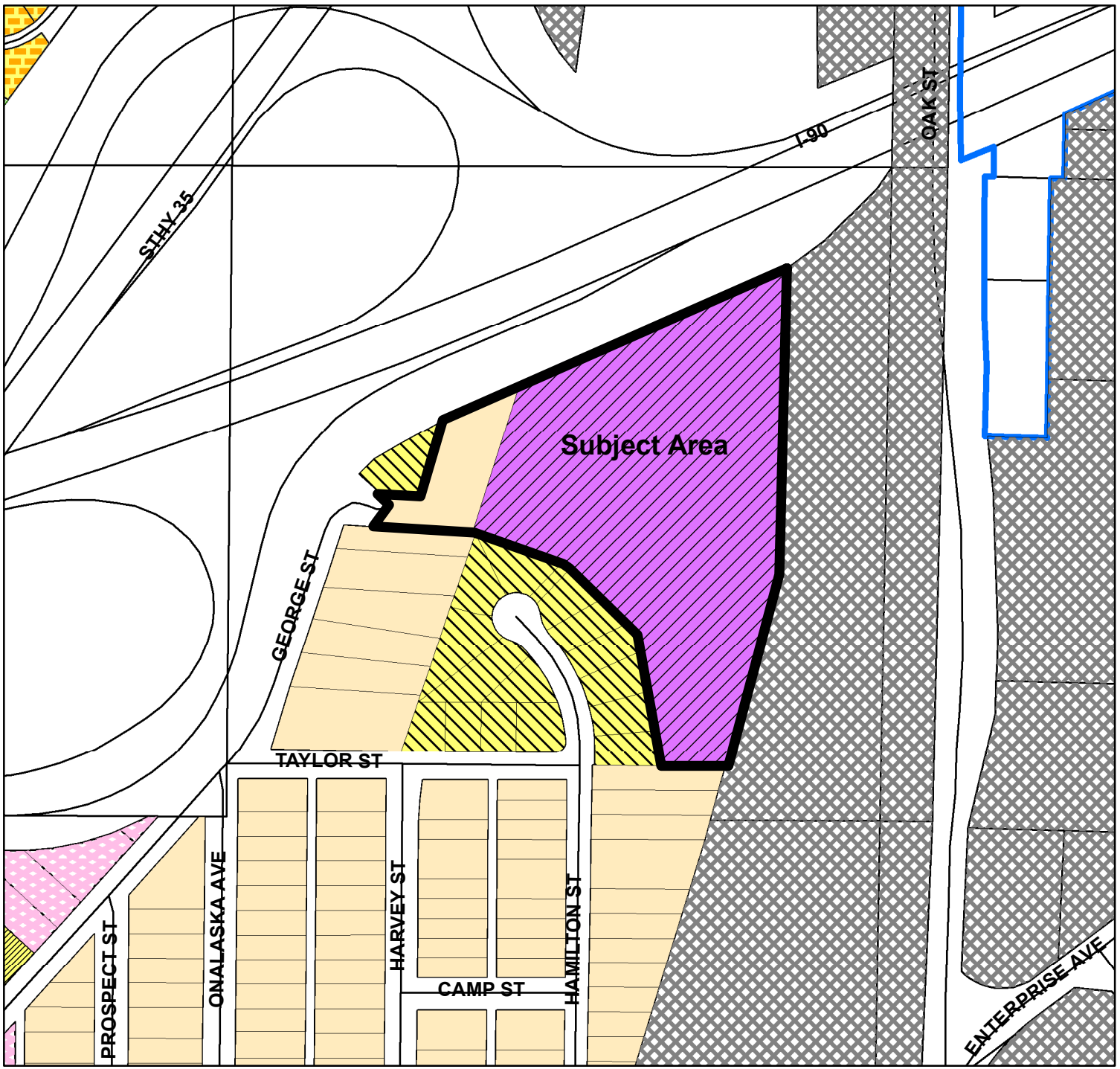


## BASIC ZONING DISTRICTS

	R1 - SINGLE FAMILY
	R2 - RESIDENCE
	WR - WASHBURN RES
	R3 - SPECIAL RESIDENCE
	R4 - LOW DENSITY MULTI
	R5 - MULTIPLE DWELLING
	R6 - SPECIAL MULTIPLE
	PD- PLANNED DEVELOP
	TND - TRAD NEIGH DEV.
	C1 - LOCAL BUSINESS
	C2 - COMMERCIAL
	C3 - COMMUNITY BUSINESS
	M1 - LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
	M2 - HEAVY INDUSTRIAL
	PS - PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC
	PL - PARKING LOT
	UT - PUBLIC UTILITY
	CON - CONSERVANCY
	FW - FLOODWAY
	A1 - AGRICULTURAL
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	City Limits
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