

**Agenda Item 24-0951 (Tim Acklin)**

AN ORDINANCE to amend Subsection 115-110 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse by transferring certain property from the Washburn Residential Neighborhood District to the Traditional Neighborhood District - Specific allowing for continued use of the property as a professional office space at 212 11<sup>th</sup> Street South.

**Original Date of Staff Report**

July 29, 2024

**Reason for Referral**

Upon the recommendation of the City Attorney, the Common Council referred this item for 90 days, at their August 8, 2024, meeting and directed staff to draft a more specific Traditional Neighborhood Development zoning ordinance. This ordinance was adopted by the Common Council at their October 10, 2024, meeting.

**New Information**

The applicant's petition for rezoning has not changed. What has changed in this review is the adoption of the new Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) zoning ordinance and whether this petition meets this new ordinance. The key elements in the ordinance to review this petition by are:

- **Principles of Traditional Neighborhood 115-403(a)(1)**  
Due to the smaller lot size (less than 2 acres) of TND zoning, the ordinance allows for infill/redevelopment projects to take into account the surrounding uses, design elements, and neighborhood when determining whether it meets the intent of the ordinance.

The subject property is located in the Downtown Neighborhood which is centrally located in La Crosse. It is surrounded by a higher density of buildings and a variety of uses that are within walking distance of its residents making this a compact neighborhood. This neighborhood includes the highest mix of residential types providing housing to all types of households that are within close proximity to commercial, civic spaces and parks.

Being one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city, it is inherently design for human scale as it maintains the traditional street grid interconnected with sidewalks, public transit, pedestrian lighting, and bicycle infrastructure all of which provides connections to the Historic Commercial Downtown, higher education institutions, and health care facilities. The subject parcel is immediately adjacent to the King Street Greenway which was designed primarily to serve as an alternative route for bicycles. It is also less than a block away from public transit routes.

The subject property will be retaining its existing building and, while not considered historically significant, was constructed in the late 1950s and will largely be retaining its existing architectural features. The property is located adjacent to the 10<sup>th</sup> & Cass National Register of Historic Places historic district. A significant factor of the applicant's desire to rezone the

property is so that they can install solar panels on the roof. Located on the flat roof they will hardly be seen from the street.

The 2040 Imagine Downtown Master Plan depicts the intersection of 11<sup>th</sup> & King Streets, which includes the subject parcel, as a recommended neighborhood infill/redevelopment site for a mix of residential uses. It is important to remember that these recommendations in plans are for when parcels are being considered for redevelopment so future developers have some reassurance on their potential investment. They are not recommendations to consider actions that remove the existing uses

The 2040 Imagine Downtown Master Plan also states that a “central facility to provide services for people experiencing housing insecurity” is a major opportunity that is needed. The Salvation Army is primarily a shelter that only offer services to individuals and families that are provided a bed. The REACH Center primarily serves a separate purpose as a facility where most, if not all, of the area agencies have come together to offer services to anyone.

The Land Use Element in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for the Downtown Neighborhood depicts “Existing Uses” as a desirable land use. These services and uses begin at this location in 2021. The Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2023. Any new Institutional uses are listed as undesirable. “Existing Uses” are noted within each Future Land Use Category to specify that an existing use is always “Allowable” on any property in La Crosse and that no existing property must be changed in order to comply with the Future Land Use Plan. When a property seeks a zoning change that is also considered a change in use, it will no longer be automatically considered “Allowable” as an existing land use and the desired future land uses are considered. Staff consulted with the Chief Building Inspector as they are the designated zoning administrator for the City who determined that, based off the applicant’s proposed list of uses and even though some are currently not being conducted on the property, it would **NOT** be considered a change in use. All existing and proposed uses would be permitted under an office use.

- **Applicable Design Standards 115-403(d)**

The proposed, and current, use of the property as a professional and medical office is a listed use in the adopted TND ordinance.

As this is an existing structure with no proposed changes to the site, and little proposed changes to the existing building, many of the design standards are not applicable. This includes development density, stormwater management, lot and block standards, and landscaping.

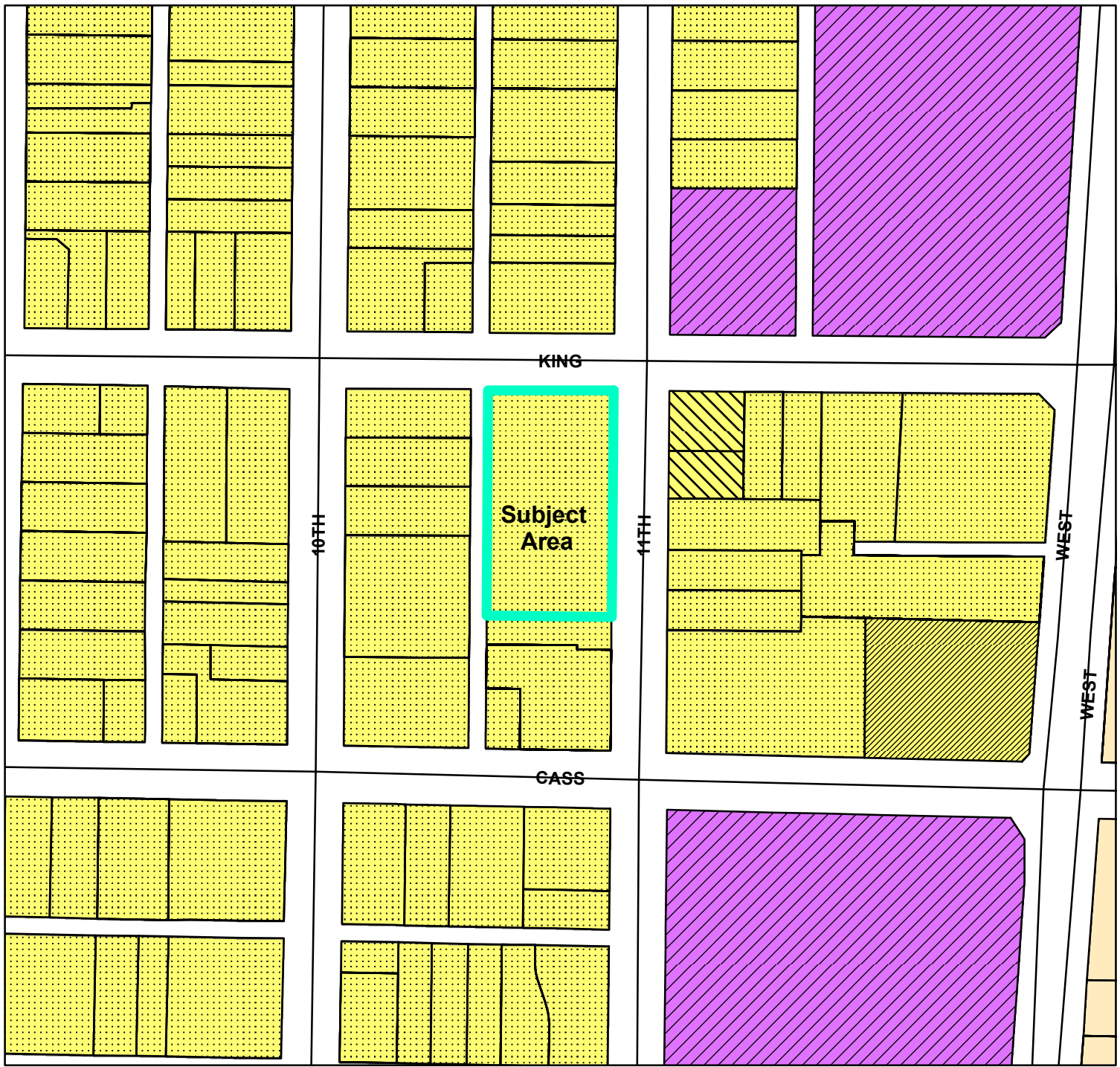
The property would be required to meet the city’s off-street parking requirement. Since the current use is considered “commercial”, and not residential, there are no off-street parking requirements. The property is still required to meet ADA requirements for off-street parking.

The existing building would not be considered architecturally significant which requires any proposed exterior improvements/renovations to the building to meet the city’s multi-family or commercial design standards. Since the proposed building improvements consisted of new window openings and solar panels on the roof, review was only needed by the Planning Department and Community Risk Management. The additional window openings met the pedestrian connection design standard. The proposed solar panels were considered adequately screened from the street and were only reviewed by CRM for building code compliance.

**Staff Recommendation**

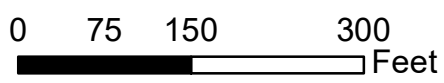
**Approval** – The intent of traditional neighborhood developments is to have compact neighborhoods that includes a mix of uses in close proximity to its residents reducing the dependency on cars. It includes safer streets for peds and bikes and overall is developing a livable, or complete, neighborhood. Taking into account the surrounding neighborhood’s mix of residential types, commercial uses and interconnected public infrastructure the proposed rezoning petition meets the intent of the recently adopted Traditional Neighborhood Development ordinance. The proposed use as a professional/medical office providing resources to a mix of demographics only adds to a neighborhood that already meets the definition of traditional neighborhood development.

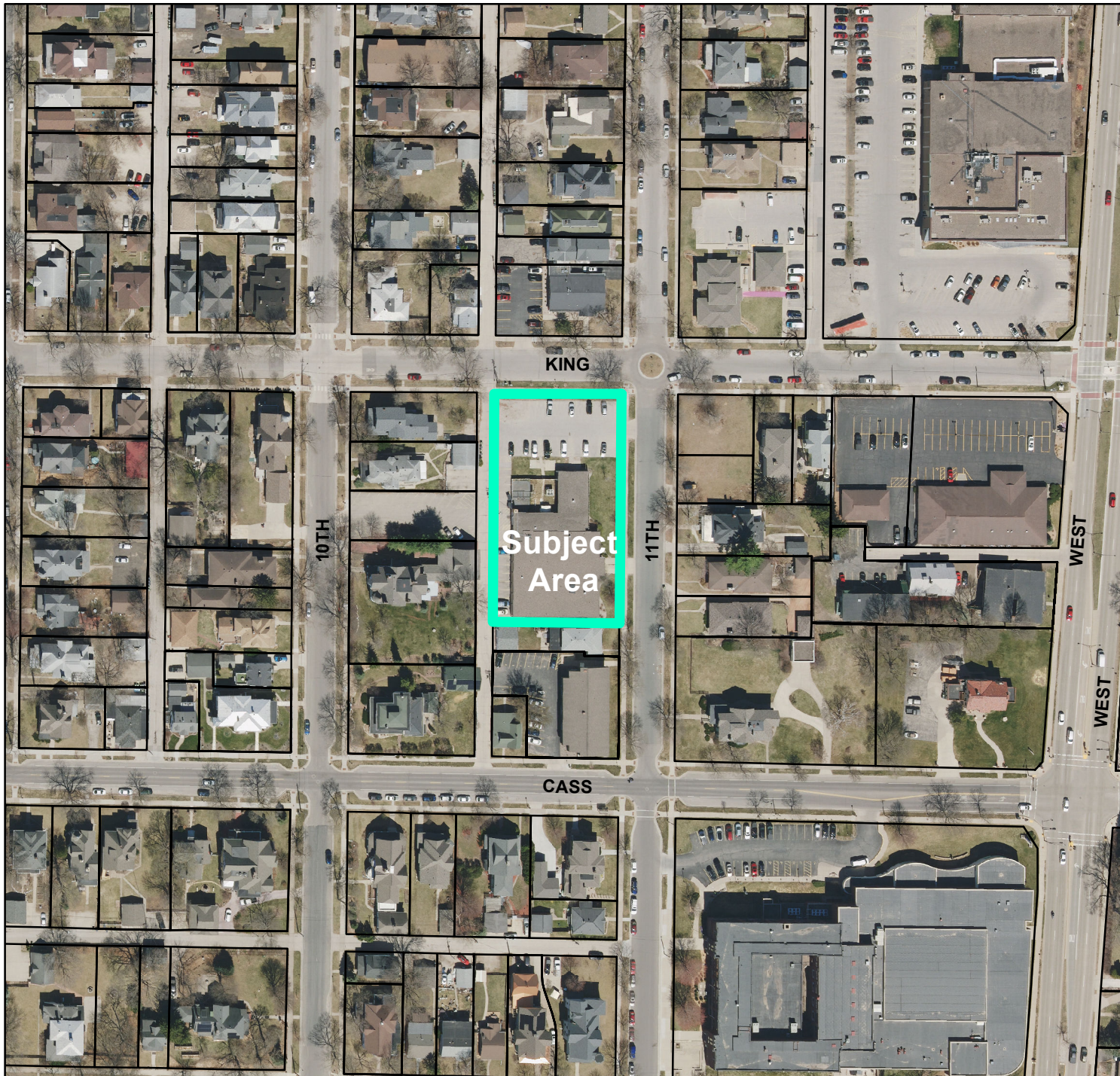
**Routing** J&A 11.6.2024























## 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
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- FW - FLOODWAY
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