

**CITY OF LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN
CITY PLAN COMMISSION
REPORT
March 2, 2020**

➤ **AGENDA ITEM – 20-0257 (Tim Acklin)**

AN ORDINANCE to amend Subsection 115-110 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse transferring certain property from the Traditional Neighborhood District - General to the Traditional Neighborhood District - Specific allowing mixed-use development at 1222 Denton St.

➤ **ROUTING:** CPC 3/2/2020; J&A 3/3/2020

➤ **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Subject Ordinance would transfer the property depicted on attached **MAP PC20-0257** from the Traditional Neighborhood Development-General District to the Traditional Neighborhood Development-Specific District in order to allow for a mixed-use development.

The current building was originally built as a fire station in 1895. It served as a fire station until 1967 at which point it was converted to a senior center. It has continued to serve as a senior center up to August/September of 2019. The City of La Crosse has not performed any upgrades or maintenance on this facility since 2010. As a result, the building has continued to deteriorate, particularly the exterior. The property currently costs the City of La Crosse approximately \$10,000 per year to operate. Recently the Parks and Recreation Department successfully negotiated with the La Crosse Senior Center to move their activities elsewhere with the intent to sell the building for either a multi-family or mixed-use development.

In July of 2019 the Common Council transferred oversight to the Community Development Committee (CDC) in order to list the property for sale and send out a Request for Letters of Interest. At their December 2019 meeting the CDC selected Old #5 Development, LLC's proposal. Their proposal was to rehabilitate and restore the building back to its historic look and reuse the building for: 1) two residential units on the second floor, commercial retail and/or office on the ground floor and a commercial woodworking shop in the basement, or 2) a mix of commercial retail and/or office space on the 1st and 2nd floors and a commercial woodworking shop in the basement. The decision on whether or not to create residential units on the second story would depend whether the property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and eligible State and Federal Historic Tax Credits.

The Planning and Development Department submitted an initial historic assessment of the property to the Wisconsin Historical Society. They found the property to be potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and granted permission

to proceed with submitting a complete nomination. The Planning and Development Department has determined to let the future owner decide whether to proceed with this process or not.

The applicant has stated that the property can currently accommodate up to 4-5 off-street parking spaces. They are requesting a waiver of the off-street parking requirements from the Common Council as they believe they would not be able to meet them.

- **GENERAL LOCATION:** 1222 Denton Street. (Former Southside Senior Center) Near the intersection of Denton and West Avenue, adjacent to the Blaschke and Schneider Funeral home.

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

The Common Council approved declaring this property as surplus property, transferring ownership to the Planning and Development Department, transferring oversight to the Community Development Committee, and listing the property for sale at their July 2019 meeting.

The Common Council approved rezoning this parcel to Traditional Neighborhood Development-General to allow for a mixed-use or multi-family development at their September 2019 Meeting.

Then Community Development Committee approved moving forward in working with the applicant's proposal to develop the property for mixed-use at their December 2019 Meeting.

- **CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:**

The 2002 Future Land Use Map identifies this parcel as R-1 Zoning (its current use). However, given its adjacency to a large parking lot and commercial use, as well as the layout of the current building, this use would be compatible. In addition, other sections of the Comprehensive Plan address the issues that would be compatible with the development:

Tab 5 of the Plan Elements (Land Use) generally but specifically these objectives:

- Objective 2: **Targeted Redevelopment** on page 5-6- redevelopment and reinvestment priority in distressed neighborhoods and key activity centers
This property is located in a target area for revitalization.
- Objective 7: **Improve land use compatibility.** Minimize or eliminate land use conflicts in established neighborhoods through redevelopment of blighted, vacant, or underutilized properties.
This property is currently in a blighted condition but has historical character that, if property redeveloped, could add and preserve the character of this area.
- Objective 8: **Maintain traditional urban character.** Support and foster public and

private efforts to maintain the traditional character in traditional neighborhoods through sensitive design and rehabilitation of building, the provision of mixed-use areas.

This project would help maintain the character of this area and also introduce a mixed-use area (apartments on the edge of commercial and R-1).

- Objective 10: **Stem property deterioration**

This type of use would help ensure private investment in this building.

➤ **PLANNING RECOMMENDATION:**

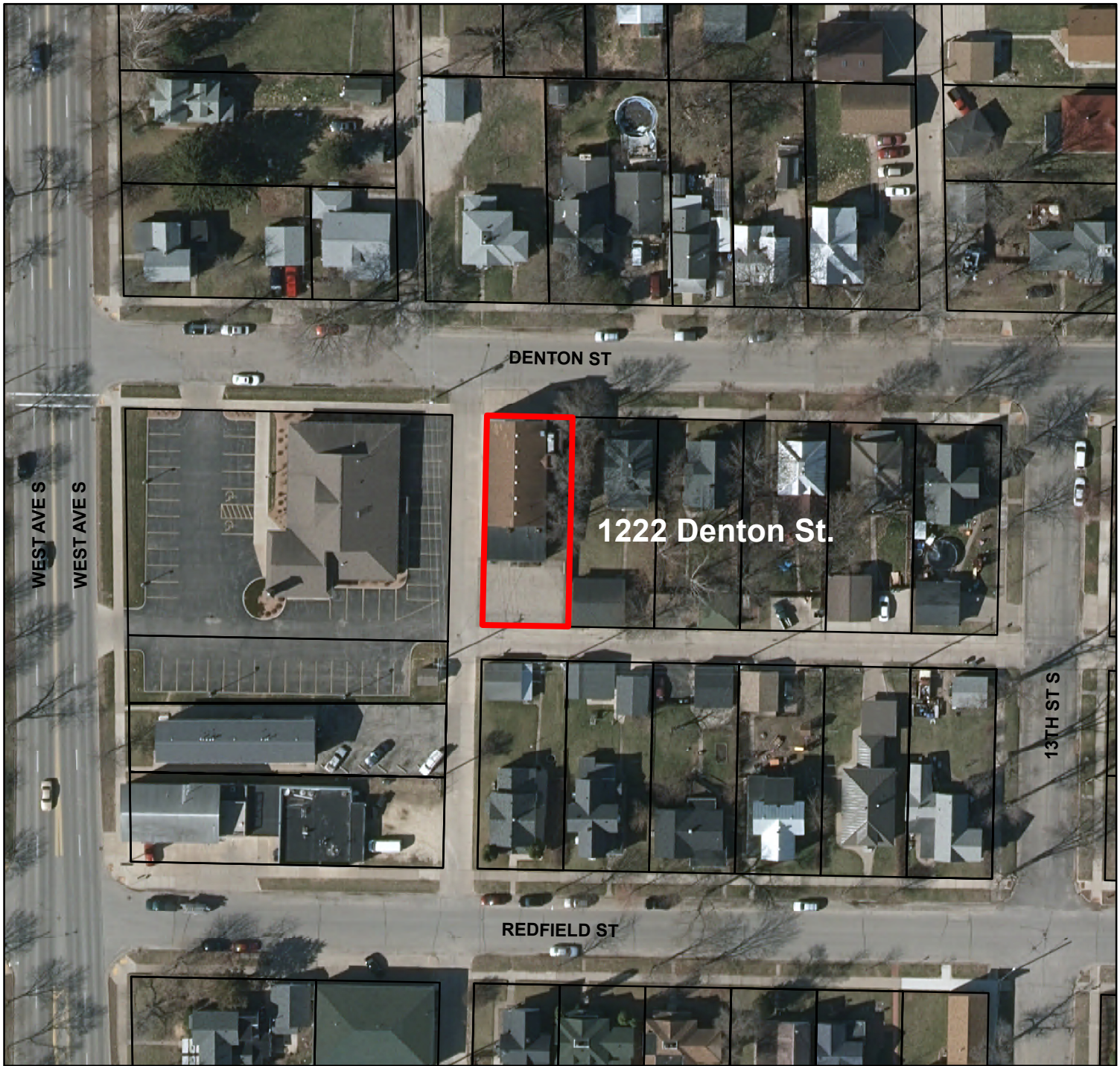
Given the shortage of new quality housing in La Crosse, the historical character of this building, its close proximity to West Avenue, and its location between a major transportation arterial and a single-family neighborhood the best use of this property is private, taxable re-development for housing or neighborhood commercial space.

At the time of the applicant's proposal a determination of the property's historic status was still under review. With the positive decision from the Wisconsin Historical Society to move forward with the nomination it is anticipated that the applicant will move forward with this effort and, should it be nominated, be able to provide residential units on the second floor. Staff would prefer the option that includes residential but would still support the option that is only commercial and office space.

Staff supports the request for a waiver of off-street parking. As this is an existing, large building that covers the majority of the lot there is little space available to likely provide adequate parking. Due to a portion of the project being "white boxed" it is unclear of the number of spaces that would be required but would likely be close to ten, maybe more if the 2nd floor is developed for commercial or office space.

This Ordinance is recommended for approval with the following conditions:

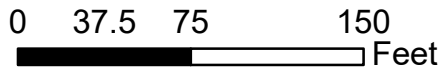
- 1) A Developer's Agreement is approved by the Community Development Committee.**
- 2) Approval includes the waiver for off-street parking. Staff conditions that if residential units are developed on the second story that one off-street parking space is dedicated per unit.**
- 3) Approval includes any mix of commercial retail or office space on the 1st and 2nd floors and the basement (subject to Building Code), residential on the 2nd floor, and a commercial woodshop for Artisan Preservation Company in the basement.**



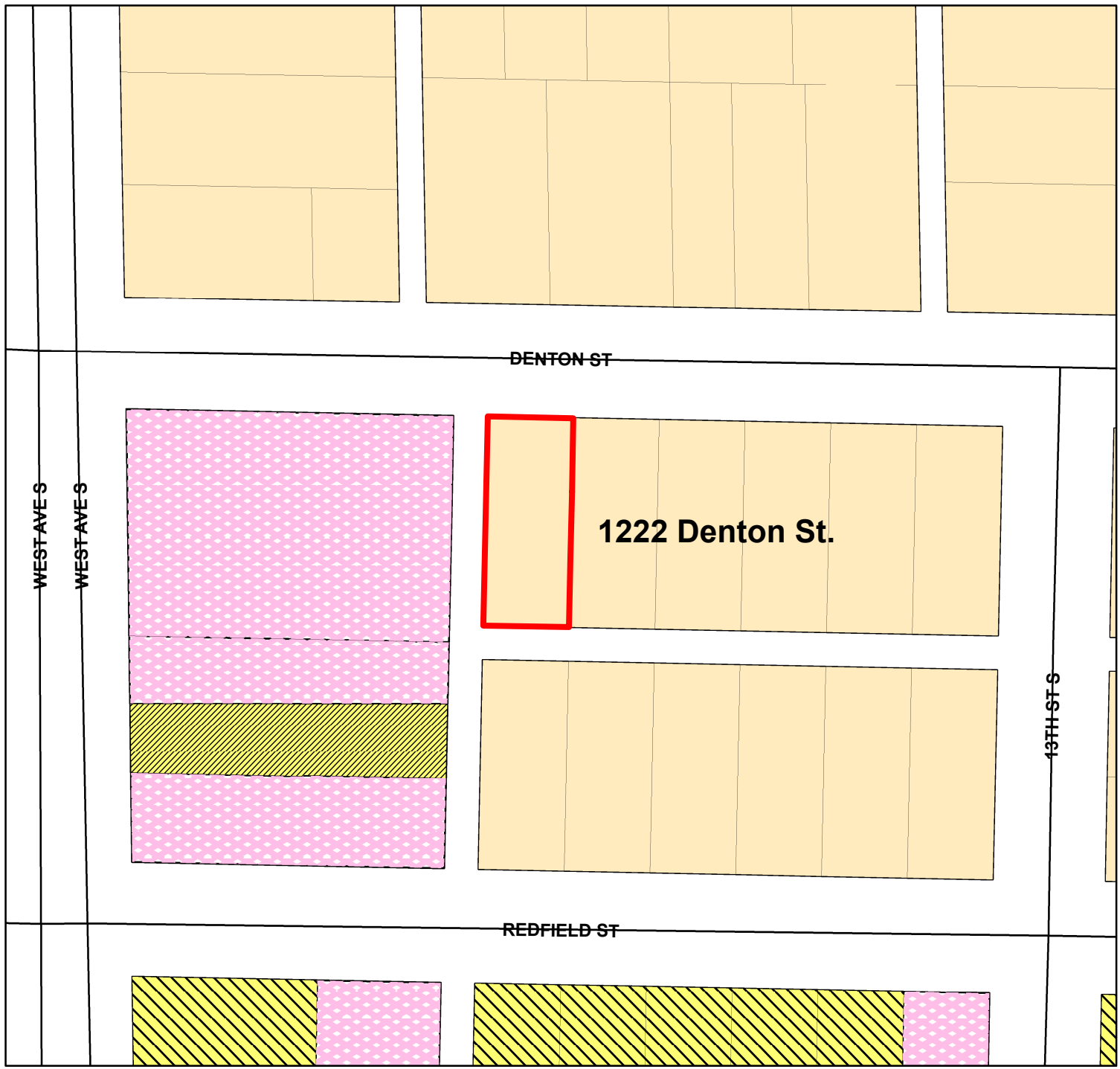
BASIC ZONING DISTRICTS

	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
	EA - EXCLUSIVE AG
	City Limits
	SUBJECT PROPERTY



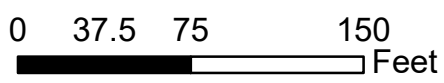


PC20-0257



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