



## **CITY OF RACINE DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT STAFF REPORT**

**Meeting Date:** 7/22/2020

**To:** Mayor and Planning, Heritage, and Design Commission Members

**From:** City Development Department, Division of Planning and Redevelopment

**Division Manager:** Matt Sadowski – (262) 636-9152 [matthew.sadowski@cityofracine.org](mailto:matthew.sadowski@cityofracine.org)

**Case Manager:** Jeff Hintz

**Location:** 500 Main Street, located on the southwest corner of the intersection of 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Main Street

**Applicant:** The Main Attraction LLC

**Property Owner:** The Main Attraction LLC

**Request:** Consideration of a conditional use permit to operate a Hotel/Motel with the possible for extended stay at 500 Main Street, for property located in a B-4 Central Business Zone District as required in section 114-508 of the Municipal Code.

This property falls within the Downtown Design Review area, and as such, a design review of the structure exterior is also included in the report as part of this project.

The property is also within the Old Main Street Historic District as contributing building number 13; as such, a Certificate of Appropriateness certifying the changes are keeping with the historic nature of the building is required. This analysis will also be included within this report.

**BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY:** The building is proposed to be LEED Platinum and would operate 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The facility would feature 80 guest rooms on floors 2 thru 4, a theater and fitness room for guests. Two food and beverage outlets are included, one on the first floor and the other as a rooftop amenity. The first floor includes a banquet space for up to 180 people and other guest services. Other operational facilities would be located in the basement level.

This building has been vacant since the early 1980's and in the early 2000's was proposed to be a museum and children's learning center. Some of the initial work on the interior of the building was completed, but the project did not move forward. The building has sat vacant until this proposal was brought forward.

The Zoning Ordinance classifies this hotel/motel establishment as permissible in the B-4 Central Business Zone District upon the issuance of a conditional use permit (114-508).



Birdseye view of the property, indicated in red (image from City Pictometry).



VIEW FROM NORTHWEST



VIEW FROM NORTHEAST



VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST



VIEW FROM SOUTHEAST

Proposed building renderings, submitted by applicant. Please view floorplans and other building details in the attachments section of the agenda, under “Applicant Submittal” for full details on the buildout and project specifications.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Parcel Number:** [276000000290000](#)

**Property Size:** 16,858 square feet

**Comprehensive Plan Map Designation:** Mixed Use – Commercial Emphasis

**Consistency with Adopted Plans:**

The [Racine Comprehensive Plan](#) states that:

- The plan should encourage the redevelopment of older areas and commercial areas.

- Maintain and develop a land use pattern that strengthens the character and livability of the City’s downtown core, commercial and industrial areas, and neighborhoods.
- Promote redevelopment and infill in areas with existing infrastructure and services, enhancing existing residential, commercial, and industrial areas.
- Promote the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities.

**Corridor or Special Design District?:** Downtown Area Design Review District

**Historic?:** Old Main Street Historic District

**Current Zoning District:** B-4 Central Business

**Purpose of Zone District:** The B4 central business district is intended to accommodate those retail and office uses which are characteristic of the major shopping streets of the downtown area of the city, and discourage uses which detract from, or are incompatible with, pedestrian and shopping oriented traffic.

**Proposed Zoning:** No change proposed

**Existing Land Use:** Former department store, vacant since the early 1980’s.

**Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses:**

<b>North</b>	B-4 Central Business	Mixed use building and surface parking
<b>East</b>	B-4 Central Business	Monument Square
<b>South</b>	B-4 Central Business	Salon
<b>West</b>	B-4 Central Business	Financial institution

**Operations:** The building is proposed to be LEED Platinum and would operate 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The facility would feature 80 guest rooms on floors 2 thru 4, a theater and fitness room for guests. Two food and beverage outlets are included, one on the first floor and the other as a rooftop amenity. The first floor includes a banquet space for up to 180 people and other guest services. Other operational facilities would be located in the basement level. Maintenance and upkeep would be handled by the management company who will be in charge of running the establishment.

## ZONING ANALYSIS:

### Development Standards:

**Density** ([114-Article V](#): Article VII, Div. 5 [Bulk Regulations](#) & 8 [Lots](#)):

Standard	Required	Provided
Lot Area	No minimum	16,858 square feet
Lot Frontage	30 feet	140 feet
Floor Area Ratio	8.0 maximum	4.21

**Setbacks** ([114-Article V](#): Article VII, Div. 6 [Development Standards](#)):

Yard	Required	Provided
Front	0 feet	0 feet
Side (west)	0 feet	0 feet
Side (east)	0 feet	0 feet
Rear (south)	0 feet	0 feet

**Building design standards** (114-Secs. [735.5](#) & [736](#)): The building on the parcel complies with the requirements of 114.735.5.b.1. The proposed addition to the building will be constructed from materials which also meet all building design requirements in the zoning ordinance.

**Off-street parking and loading requirements** (114- [Article XI](#)) : Parking is not required in the B-4 Central Business District Zone per Sec. 114-1187 of the Municipal Code. The project will be providing parking off-street to accommodate usage. It is also worth noting through parking decks and on-street parking, there are

**Landscaping, screening and yard requirements** ([114- Article V](#): Article VII, Div. 6 [Development Standards](#) & 7 [Fences and Walls](#)): The building occupies the entire property and as such, the landscaping is all within the public right-of-way and will be reviewed and approved by the City Forester for compatibility and suitability.

**Sign Regulations** (114-[Article X](#)): Signage is not a part of this request. Any future signage would need to follow the sizing requirements outlined below and be reviewed by the PHDC as this property falls within the Downtown Design Review Area.

Sign Type	Allowable Sq. Ft.	Provided Sq. Ft.
Projecting/Wall/Freestanding	200 square feet	0
Window signs	50% of window area <sup>^</sup>	N/A
Alleyway Signage	N/A	N/A
Total	200 square feet	0

<sup>^</sup>Each building is allowed two (2) window signs under four (4) square feet in total size, which do not count against the total allowable signage.

**Outdoor lighting, signs** ([114-Sec. 742](#)): The submitted plans include the installation of new exterior lighting. Upon review of the fixture designs and the exterior illumination plans, the proposal for lighting conforms to development standards.

**Rubbish and trash storage** ([114-Article V](#) & [114-740](#)): A trash enclosure is depicted on the site plan within the southwest corner of the build. This location complies with development standards.

**Engineering, Utilities and Access:**

**Access** ([114-1151](#)): Vehicular access to the site is provided from a driveway off 5<sup>th</sup> Street via monument square. The site is also accessible from Wisconsin Avenue to the west. The site plan submitted by the applicant does not contemplate any changes to access.

**Surface drainage** ([114-739](#) & Consult Engineering Dept.): Change of use within the existing building is not expected to impact the surface drainage of this lot. The roof is a green roof and water capture and reuse is part of this project's LEED goals.

**Sewage disposal and water supply** ([114-821](#) & Consult Engineering and S/W Utility): All utilities are available for this site and the applicant proposal is not expected to impact the ability to serve this area.

**Exceptions to ordinance:** N/A

**Additional Planning and Zoning Comments:** This is a project which is like no other hotel/motel use in Racine and uses sustainability in a way which is rarely achieved in a downtown setting. This project will revitalize a building which has sat vacant for decades and is expected to serve as an amenity for the area.

## **REQUIRED FINDINGS OF FACT:**

CONDITIONAL USE FINDINGS (Sec. 114-154. – Standards.)

No Conditional Use shall be recommended by the Plan Commission unless it is found that:

- 1) The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to, or endanger, the public health, safety, morals, comfort, or general welfare.**

Staff Comments: With the recommended conditions at the end of this report, the establishment of the Conditional Use is not expected to be detrimental public safety and general welfare. Having activity and a presence in this building will be better for the area than if the building were to remain vacant or unused as it has for 40 years. This use is expected to bring customers of other businesses to the

area and serve as an amenity to the area. The sustainability features on the building are unique to hotel/motel options currently in the area and could also lend themselves to additional visitors. The overall operating plan addresses typical issues which can arise with the operation of such a facility.

- 2) The conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood.**

Staff Comments: This conditional use is not anticipated to be injurious to other properties in the general area, assuming the recommended conditions are adopted with this request. The recommended conditions ensure this property will not impair property values or the enjoyment of adjacent properties. The nature of the business is one which people, likely from outside of Racine, would be staying for events, business, or vacation. That being said, the project also includes two dining areas and convention space which could certainly be utilized by those who reside in the community and those visiting. The proposed use and operational logistics of the facility are anticipated to be an amenity to the area and not a detriment.

- 3) The establishment of the conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.**

Staff Comments: The establishment of this proposed extended stay hotel/motel facility is not expected to impede development patterns in the area through the reuse of and addition thereto of this existing building. The proposed conditions with this request help to ensure that development in the area remains consistent and orderly, while accommodating for new land uses. The area is at the heart of the community and higher building densities (floor area ratio), more foot traffic and generally speaking, extended hours of business. This type of facility will fit in with the mix of land uses and be a compliment to the general area. Development of adjacent property will not be hindered or negatively impacted by this development.

- 4) Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or necessary facilities have been or are being provided.**

Staff Comments: The site plan submitted by the applicant does not propose any changes to the utilities or drainage for the site. There is a green roof proposed which will help to capture and reuse rainwater; the site also features solar panels and geothermal heating/cooling facilities which will help reduce the use of overall usage of utilities on this site. The use of this site and existing building is not expected to impact the provision of utilities for the property or general area.

- 5) Adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designated as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.**

Staff Comments: The applicant is not contemplating any changes to the access to this site. The site will remain accessible from Monument square, but the direction of travel will change; It is currently

south to north, but will transition from north to south. There is ample space for loading and unloading in front of the building and parking available on the side street for the same purpose. Parking in this area is plentiful when factoring in the garages within a block of this site.

**6) The proposed conditional use is not contrary to the objectives of the current land use plan for the city.**

Staff Comments: The plan for this area calls for the development of the site as mixed use commercial emphasis. The proposed development fits within this vision and is mixing commercial uses on the site. The downtown area is generally envisioned the same way within the land use plan for the City and when considering the entire downtown area, it does function as a mixed use area with commercial emphasis. This proposal is expected to fit in with the general area and also fulfill goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

**7) The conditional use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may, in each instance, be modified pursuant to the recommendations of the plan commission.**

Staff Comments: With the recommended conditions, it is expected that this development will operate in accordance with the applicable regulations for this zone district. No exceptions are needed for this development to meet all development standards for this site.

#### HOTEL/MOTEL USE FINDINGS (SEC. 114-468(6)(k))

No Conditional Use shall be recommended by the Plan Commission unless it is found that:

**1) The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed project will not create urban decay due to significant loss of business or property values in the area surrounding the property.**

Staff Comments: Based on the plans presented by the applicant, it is anticipated the property will increase significantly in value. The proposed improvements will add building floor area and finishing the interior so it is habitable will certainly add economic value to the area. This project will not create urban decay, but will enhance the overall values and aesthetics of the area.

**2) The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed project will not create an unreasonable or excessive demand for police services.**

Staff Comments: The proposal from the applicant indicates that staff will be trained to treat visitors and guests in a manner which defuses, rather than escalates situations; additionally, the hotel will be professionally staffed and will have a zero tolerance policy for those not following the rules.



**3) The applicant has provided an acceptable management plan to deal with potential criminal activities at the premises so as to avoid becoming a public nuisance.**

Staff Comments: The owner and operator of the hotel will have a zero tolerance policy for nefarious activities which will be clearly communicated to guests of the establishment. The property will be monitored 24 hours a day 7 days a week by surveillance cameras in public areas. These cameras will be monitored and upon signs of mischief or criminal activity, proper authorities will be contacted. Safety and security will be constantly monitored and increased as necessary.

Certificate of Appropriateness Findings (Historic Preservation) SEC. 58-64(f)

Findings of appropriateness shall be rendered unless it is determined that:

**1) The activity will be detrimental to the maintenance and overall historic character of the landmark, landmark site, contributing property or district;**

Staff Comments: The overall activity is beneficial to the property as the restoration and rehabilitation of the building is expected to keep it in service in the same general form and massing as when it was built. This action alone ensures that the historic character of the building, and in turn the area will be undoubtedly enhanced. Having such a prominent property underutilized for nearly 40 years typically leads to demolition due to deterioration and neglect. The fact this property is able to be saved and repurposed to a more suitable economic use than which it was originally built helps to ensure it will be around well into the future. As such, it is expected that the activities proposed for the building will enhance the overall district in which the building is located.

**2) The activity will impede the current or future preservation or restoration of the subject property or district;**

Staff Comments: It is not expected that the applicant proposal will impede future preservation or restoration of the property. In fact, by moving forward with the project, the development will ensure the property is preserved in the future. Failure to move forward with the project would result in the potential further deterioration of the building if it were to remain vacant and unmaintained. By having an active use in the property taking care of building maintenance coupled with a fully and historically accurate renovation of the building, it is nearly guaranteed the building will be preserved for future generations to appreciate and treasure.

**3) Adequate measures will not be taken to protect the integrity of distinctive features, finishes, construction techniques, or examples of craftsmanship of the subject or adjacent landmark, landmark sites or contributing property;**

Staff Comments: The SHPO conditional approval, which must be followed in order to receive federal and state historic tax credits ensures all historical features will remain in place in order to

receive that portion of the project funding stack. Additionally, the plans submitted by the applicant do not contemplate the removal of any significant exterior features, but the preservation of historical detailing elements on the building.

**4) The activity is contrary or detrimental to the findings of the original designation of the subject property or district;**

Staff comments: The proposed activity and rehabilitation of the building is in keeping with the findings of the original district. While not originally developed as a hotel, a commerce district would have had places in which people spent the night while on a trip for business or pleasure. While no original hotels remain in the Main Street area as buildings have been repurposed throughout the decades, the spirit and intent of the district is being met. Having the building in use and in good repair ensure it will be around for future generations to learn and benefit from.

**5) The activity will not stabilize the landmark, landmark site or contributing property for future preservation or restoration efforts; or**

Staff Comments: the applicant plans will enhance the economic viability of this structure by keeping it in service and use, which is of the utmost importance for preserving historic buildings. Structures with economic viability are more likely to be preserved for future generations to enjoy. By restoring the building and providing a useful economic purpose, this project will preserve the building for future generations to enjoy.

**6) The activity does not conform to criteria adopted by the common council to provide guidelines for the alteration and restoration of historic properties such as, but not limited to, those contained in section 58-64.5, H-Historic Properties district design guidelines and section 114-619, Architectural guidelines.**

Staff Comments: The proposal and submitted plans do keep with the guidelines for the alteration and restoration of historic properties as adopted by the city. Furthermore, the SHPO has conditionally approved the proposal for the design and alterations of the building. The goals of preservation are being met as a result of this proposed development.

Downtown Area Design Guidelines – Evaluation Criteria SEC. 114-829

The following design guidelines evaluation criteria shall be used to determine if a proposed activity fulfills the objectives of this division:

**1) Traffic circulation. All vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems shall provide adequate and reasonably safe access through the downtown, and should promote a pedestrian friendly environment.**

Staff Comments: The building has clearly defined pedestrian entrances/exits and is anticipated to serve as a destination type development for the downtown. While off-street parking is not required for developments in the downtown, the applicant has made arrangements to secure parking for the anticipated demand of the use. The front parking pickup/drop-off area further enhances the pedestrian experience by removing parked vehicles from the front entrance; the area will be more active and generally free from permanently parked vehicles, which would detract from the overall development.

**2) Environmental design. All projects shall incorporate sustainable environmental design, processes and practices when possible or practical.**

Staff Comments: This proposed development has gone above and beyond the normal call to incorporate sustainable development practices. The use of a green roof, solar and geothermal technologies is an admirable goal for future projects to achieve. Through the LEED certification process, it will be demonstrated that this project is a leader amongst current hotel/motel developments in the area and a model for others to follow when repurposing historical structure(s).

**3) Site layout and building arrangement.**

Staff Comments: the building addition fits the scope and scale of the area and most importantly, the historic building the addition is being connected to. The proposed addition is compatible with the downtown area as a whole and the buildings in the immediate vicinity. The addition is complimentary to the unique character of the former Zahn's Building and complies with requirements of historic preservation for tax credit purposes. The massing and scale of the building compliment the site and are appropriate for meaningful infill development in a historic district.

**4) Project design. All projects shall be designed with attention and sensitivity to the historical, architectural, and physical context in which they are, or are to be located. Special attention should be paid to the sidewalk level of buildings through the creation of pedestrian orientated details.**

Staff Comments: The site is oriented towards the scale of the pedestrian and is geared towards those users on the sidewalk as opposed to those driving past in cars. As already mentioned, the proposed design achieves compliance with historic preservation concerns by preserving the building in the historical and architectural context in which it was originally created. The new addition is differentiated from the original building and the roof top improvements will not be readily visible from the street. This will preserve the historic feeling of the building and is not expected to alter the characteristics of the other historical properties in the general area.

**5) Parking and loading layout. Proposed parking and truck loading facilities shall be designed, located and screened to minimize adverse visual impact on adjacent properties.**

Staff Comments: Loading will be done at the rear for freight deliveries and such, people can load and unload on the east or west side of the building, but is geared to be done on the east for the most part. That being said, this is expected to be accomplished in a fairly short time and the vehicles will be parked off site or driven away. There is no anticipated impact on visual site lines as a result of the plans proposed by the applicant.

- 6) Landscaping. Landscaping design should enhance the overall appearance of the downtown area, create a logical transition to adjacent development, screen incompatible structures and uses, and minimize the visual impact of parking facilities on adjacent sites and roadways. Plant materials shall be selected so as to withstand the city's climate and the microclimate on the property.**

Staff Comments: In an urban, historical setting landscaping was done in the right-of-way and not on private property. This contextual clue about the age of development is being carried forward with this site plan as all landscaping is within the public realm. It would be incompatible in this setting, to have landscaping provided on the private lot as it would be out of context with the surrounding development patterns. That being said, the proposed landscaping is appropriate for the scale of the development and context of the area.

- 7) Signage. Signs should be minimal in number and size. Placement of signs shall not unduly obscure or interfere with sight lines to other properties. Signs should be architecturally compatible and contribute to the historic character of the area through the incorporation of tasteful presentations utilizing appropriate logos, symbols, graphics and/or text. Free-standing signs should incorporate architectural features or materials of the buildings or facilities they are intended to promote. Signs shall comply with all zoning requirements.**

Staff Comments: Signage will be reviewed at a future date and will be reviewed using the standards of this criterion and the design guidelines pertaining to signage.

- 8) Site illumination. Site illumination shall be designed, located and installed so as to minimize adverse impacts on adjacent streets and properties, provide security, and enhance the overall quality of the development.**

Staff Comments: The proposed lighting fixtures do not dominate the environment and will have a minimal impact on adjacent properties. The design of the fixtures compliments the historic nature of the property and is keeping with the architectural style of the buildings.

- 9) Historic preservation. Preservation of unique historic or architectural landmarks is encouraged. Development designs that do not detract from desirable architectural resources on surrounding sites are also encouraged.**

Staff Comments: The project is anticipated to receive state and federal historic tax credits, the proposal has been reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office and is currently under review

by the National Park Service. The building will be preserved and this criterion is described more in depth in the historic review analysis section which preceded this section in the report.

**10) Modifications to criteria. The above criteria may be modified by provisions of the flex development overlay, a planned development conditional use permit, or by administrative discretion as may be afforded by this chapter.**

Staff Comments: No modifications to criteria are required for this development, it complies with all applicable development and design standards for the zone district, historic district and design review district.

## **POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR THE PLANNING, HERITAGE AND DESIGN COMMISSION**

1. Approve the request as submitted; or
2. Approve the request with conditions deemed necessary to mitigate any adverse impacts that could arise from the project; or
3. Deny the request; or
4. Defer the request to obtain more specific information about the request.
5. Defer with a continuance of the public hearing to a date certain.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF FACT IN THIS REPORT, THAT THE REQUEST FROM THE MAIN ATTRACTION LLC, SEEKING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO OPERATE AN EXTENDED STAY HOTEL/MOTEL AT 500 MAIN STREET BE APPROVED, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- a) That the plans presented to the Planning, Heritage, and Design Commission on July 22, 2020 be approved subject to the conditions contained herein.
- b) That all license requirements from the State of Wisconsin and City of Racine be obtained, complied with, and kept current at all times.
- c) That all of the following occur prior to occupancy, unless otherwise noted:
  1. Signage be approved by the City of Racine PHDC prior to installation on the site.
  2. All comments from the City Joint Plan Review team be addressed prior to the permitting and/or final occupancy of the proposed improvements.
- d) That if, prior to the issuance of an Occupancy Permit, required site improvements listed in “c” above have not been or cannot be completed, a financial surety shall be provided to the

City. The surety shall be in a format as approved by the City Attorney's office, and subject to all stipulations as identified for financial sureties in the City of Racine. The dollar amount shall be determined at the time of application based upon estimates provided by the applicants for any incomplete work, and shall be valid for no less than one (1) year from the date of issuance. The surety format and content is subject to review and approval by the City Attorney.

- e) That all conditions of approval from the Wisconsin SHPO and NPS related to historic preservation of the property be adhered to.
- f) That all codes and ordinances are complied with and required permits acquired.
- g) That no minor changes be made from the conditions of this permit without approval of the Plan Commission, and no major changes be made from the conditions of this permit without the approval of the Common council.
- h) That this conditional use permit is subject to Plan Commission review for compliance with the listed conditions.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1) Property owner notification map indicating the subject property;
- 2) Aerial Photo indicating the subject property;
- 3) Zoning Map indicating the subject property;
- 4) Land Use Map from Comprehensive Plan, indicating the subject property;
- 5) Site photos of the property and general area; and
- 6) Submittal documents (view in legistar).

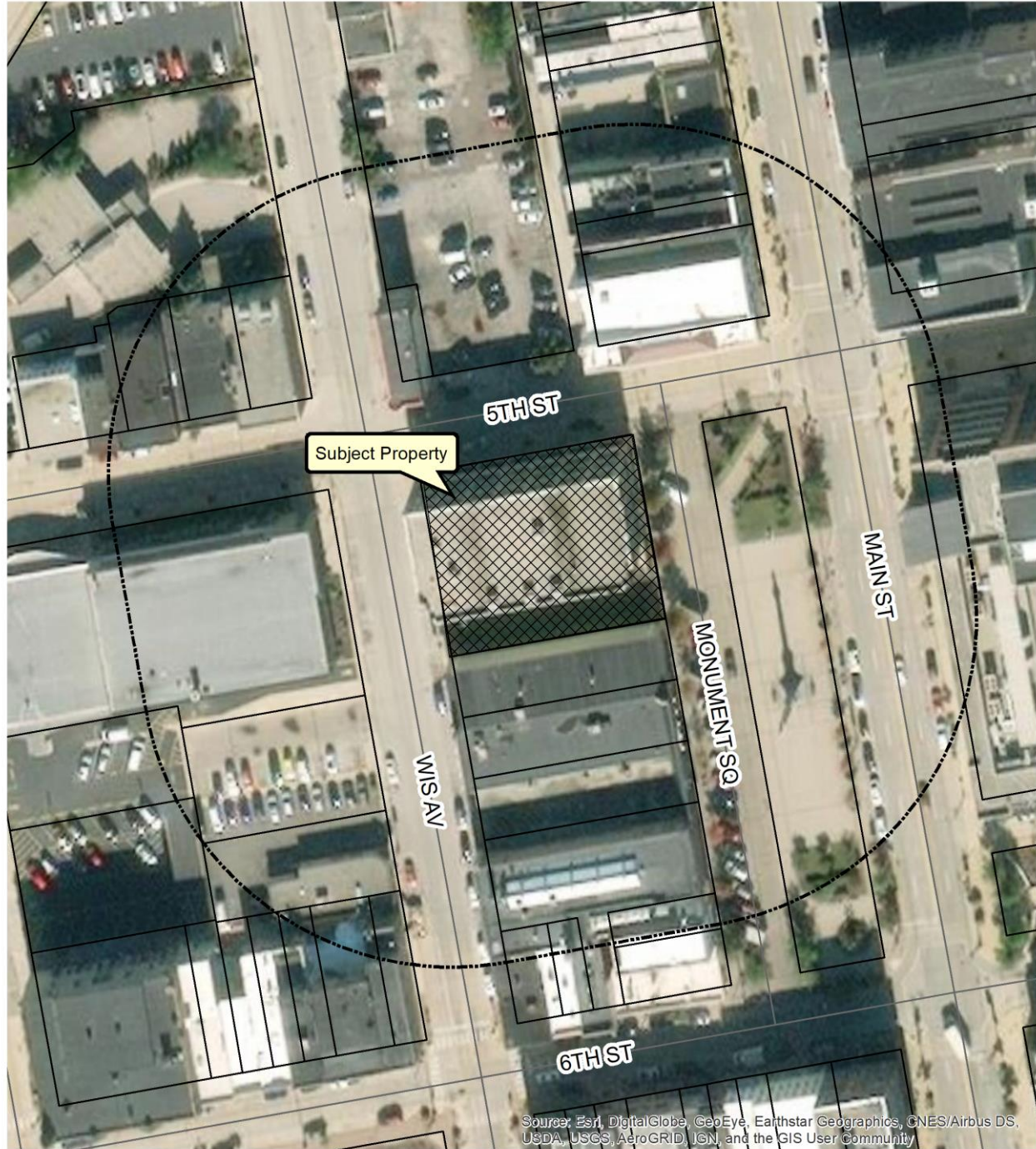


# Conditional Use Request - 500 Main Street

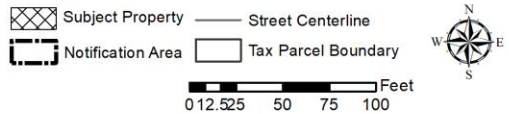




# Conditional Use Request - 500 Main Street



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community











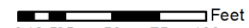
# Conditional Use Request - 500 Main Street



### Zoning Designation

 B-4

-  Subject Property
-  Notification Area
-  Street Centerline
-  Tax Parcel Boundary

 Feet  
0 12.525 50 75 100





# Conditional Use Request - 500 Main Street



### Land Use Designation

Mixed Use - Commercial Emphasis Recreational

Subject Property Notification Area  
 Street Centerline Tax Parcel Boundary

0 12.525 50 75 100 Feet



Site Photos



Looking west at property from Monument Square



Looking south at subject property



Looking east at subject property



Looking north along Wisconsin Avenue



Looking south along Wisconsin Avenue



Looking southwest at subject property