



CITY OF RACINE DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: 2/16/2026

To: Mayor and Planning, Heritage and Design Commission Members

From: City Development Department, Division of Planning and Redevelopment

Division Manager: Steven Madsen – (262) 636-9153 – steven.madsen@cityofracine.org

Case Manager: Michelle Cook

Location: 1717 Douglas Avenue

Applicant: Ruben Hernandez Cruz, o.b.o. La Mexicanita Taqueria y Corniceria Racine Corp.

Property Owner: Ruben Hernandez Cruz

Request: Consideration of a conditional use permit to allow for a electronic message sign at 1717 Douglas Avenue for property located in a B-2 Community Shopping Zone District, as allowed by Sec. 114-1033 of the Municipal Code.

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY: The applicant seeks approval for an electronic message sign at the building at 1717 Douglas Avenue. The building currently operates as a grocery store with hours of operation being from 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. seven days a week.

The Zoning Ordinance allows electronic message signs within this B-2 Community Shopping Zone District upon the issuance of a conditional use permit (114-1033).



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



Proposed electronic message sign, submitted by the applicant.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Parcel Number: 20058000

Property Size: 25,574 square feet

Comprehensive Plan Map Designation: Medium Intensity

Consistency with Adopted Plans:

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

- 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 infill development in areas with existing infrastructure and services, protecting natural areas, and provide adequate infrastructure, public services, and land supply to meet existing and future.

Corridor or Special Design District?: Douglas Avenue Corridor

Historic?: N/A

Current Zoning District: B-2 Community Shopping

Purpose of Zone District: The B2 community shopping district is intended to accommodate the needs of a much larger consumer population than is served by the neighborhood convenience district, thus a wider range of uses and structure sizes is permitted for both daily and occasional shopping.

Proposed Zoning: No change proposed

Existing Land Use: Grocery Store

Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses:

North	B-2 Community Shopping R-3 Limited General Residence	Dwelling Units
East	R-3 Limited General Residence	Dwelling Units
South	B-2 Community Shopping	Dwelling Units
West	B-2 Community Shopping	Bank/Gas Station

Operations: The hours of operation are from 8:00 AM – 9:00 PM, seven days a week.

ANALYSIS:

Development Standards:

Density ([114-Article V](#): Article VII, Div. 5 [Bulk Regulations](#) & 8 [Lots](#)): The existing building complies with all bulk and lot standards.

Standard	Required	Provided
Lot Area	No minimum	25,574 square feet
Lot Frontage	30 feet	150 feet
Floor Area Ratio	4.0	.39

Setbacks ([114-Article V](#): Article VII, Div. 6 [Development Standards](#)): The applicant is not proposing any changes to setbacks. Setbacks comply with the development standards.

Yard	Required	Provided
Front (West)	0 feet	0 feet
Side (North)	0 feet	134 feet
Side (South)	0 feet	0 feet
Rear (West)	0 feet	27 feet

Building design standards (114-Secs. [735.5](#) & [736](#)) No changes are being proposed to the building.

Off-street parking and loading requirements (114- [Article XI](#)): The applicant is not proposing any changes to parking. The parking complies with the development standards.

Landscaping, screening and yard requirements ([114- Article V](#): Article VII, Div. 6 [Development Standards](#) & 7 [Fences and Walls](#)): The applicant is not proposing any changes to the landscaping, screening, or the yard.

Sign Regulations (114-[Article X](#)): The signage on the lot would need to follow the sizing and other requirements outlined below. In addition, electronic message signs must, at minimum, follow the criteria outlined in Sec. 114-1033 (b) in the Municipal Code.

Sign Type	Allowable Sq. Ft.	Provided Sq. Ft.	Maximum Height	Proposed Height
Projecting/Wall/Freestanding	157 sq. ft.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Electronic	39.25 sq. ft.	39.25 sq. ft.*	15 feet	17 feet*
Total	196.25 feet	feet		

The height of the current pole will have to be reduced to meet the requirements of Sec. 114-1033 of the Municipal Code and the size of the electronic sign would have to comply with this section as well.

Outdoor lighting, signs ([114-Sec. 742](#)): The applicant is not proposing any changes to lighting. The site lighting complies with the development standards and focuses light onto the subject property and not onto adjacent properties.

Rubbish and trash storage ([114-Article V](#) & [114-740](#)): The applicant is not proposing any changes to rubbish and trash storage.

Engineering, Utilities and Access:

Access ([114-1151](#)): Access to the site is provided from Hagerer Street and Douglas Avenue. There are no changes proposed to site access.

Surface drainage ([114-739](#) & Consult Engineering Dept.): The use of this existing building is not expected to alter the area or lot.

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: N/A

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: The operation of the proposed electronic message sign is not expected to be detrimental to the public safety, general health or welfare of the area. The placement of the signs is along the commercially developed area of Douglas Avenue and not directly facing the residential development within the area.

- 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: With the recommended conditions pertaining to sign operation, the installation of the electronic message sign is not anticipated to be injurious or impact the enjoyment of other properties in the area. The message portion of the signage should not be readily visible from the residential dwellings in the area. The remainder of the property would remain unchanged and no changes are planned to the functionality and operations of this property.

- 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 area is developed as a mostly commercial district along Douglas Avenue. Since this area has surrounding commercial uses an electronic message sign is not likely to impede the normal and orderly development of the surrounding property for commercial uses permitted in the district.

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

Staff Comments: The request for a conditional use permit does not propose any changes to the access, utilities or drainage for the site.

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: No changes are proposed to the ingress and egress from the site with this request. The electronic message sign is not expected to have any impact nor create any congestion in this area.

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

Staff Comments: The Comprehensive Plan calls for a land use pattern which strengthens the character and livability of the City's downtown core, commercial, and industrial areas. The proposed electronic message sign will help a historically commercial property continue to operate and be maintained, while giving a bit more of a modern appearance to the existing signage.

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: The applicable sections of the zoning ordinance as they relate to this request are being met, as required.

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; or
5. Defer with a continuance of the public hearing to a date certain, subject to the consent of the applicant.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: THAT REQUEST FROM RUBEN HERNANDEZ CRUZ, REPRESENTING LA MAXICANITA TAQUERIA Y CORNICERIA RACINE CORP., SEEKING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR AN ELECTRONIC MESSAGE SIGN AT 1717 DOUGLAS AVENUE BE APPROVED, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

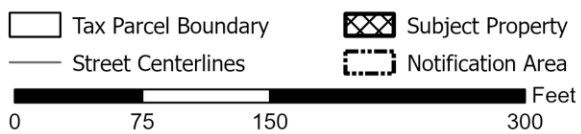
- a) That the plans presented to the Planning, Heritage and Design Commission on February 16, 2025, be approved subject to the conditions contained herein.
- b) That all codes and ordinances are complied with and required permits acquired.
- c) That the signs operate in accordance with the following provisions:
 1. Maximum brightness levels for electronic or digital display signs shall not exceed 5000 nits when measured from the sign's face at its maximum brightness, between sunrise and sunset, as determined by the National Weather Service.
 2. Maximum brightness levels for electronic, digital display signs shall not exceed 350 nits when measured from the sign's face at its maximum brightness, between sunset and sunrise, as determined by National Weather Service.
 3. That the sign shall contain static messages only and may not have movement or the appearance of movement on any part of the sign structure, display or pictorial segment of the sign.
 4. That the use of scrolling, flashing, blinking, scintillating, varying of light intensity, videos, or similar animation is prohibited.
 5. The messages may change only through dissolve or fade transitions. Each message change shall be accomplished in one second or less and each message shall remain in a fixed position for a minimum of eight seconds.
- d) That the electronic display stops changing after operating hours.
- e) That the total amount of signage on the lot complies with Sec. 114-1078 of the Municipal Code.
- f) That the height of the pole supporting the electronic sign shall be limited to a maximum of fifteen (15) feet above grade.
- g) That a hold harmless agreement be entered into with the City Attorney's office for any signage hanging over the right-of-way.
- h) That no minor changes be made from the conditions of this permit without the approval of the Department of City Development, and no major changes be made from the conditions of this permit without the approval of the Planning, Heritage and Design Commission.
- i) That this conditional use permit is subject to Planning, Heritage and Design 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).

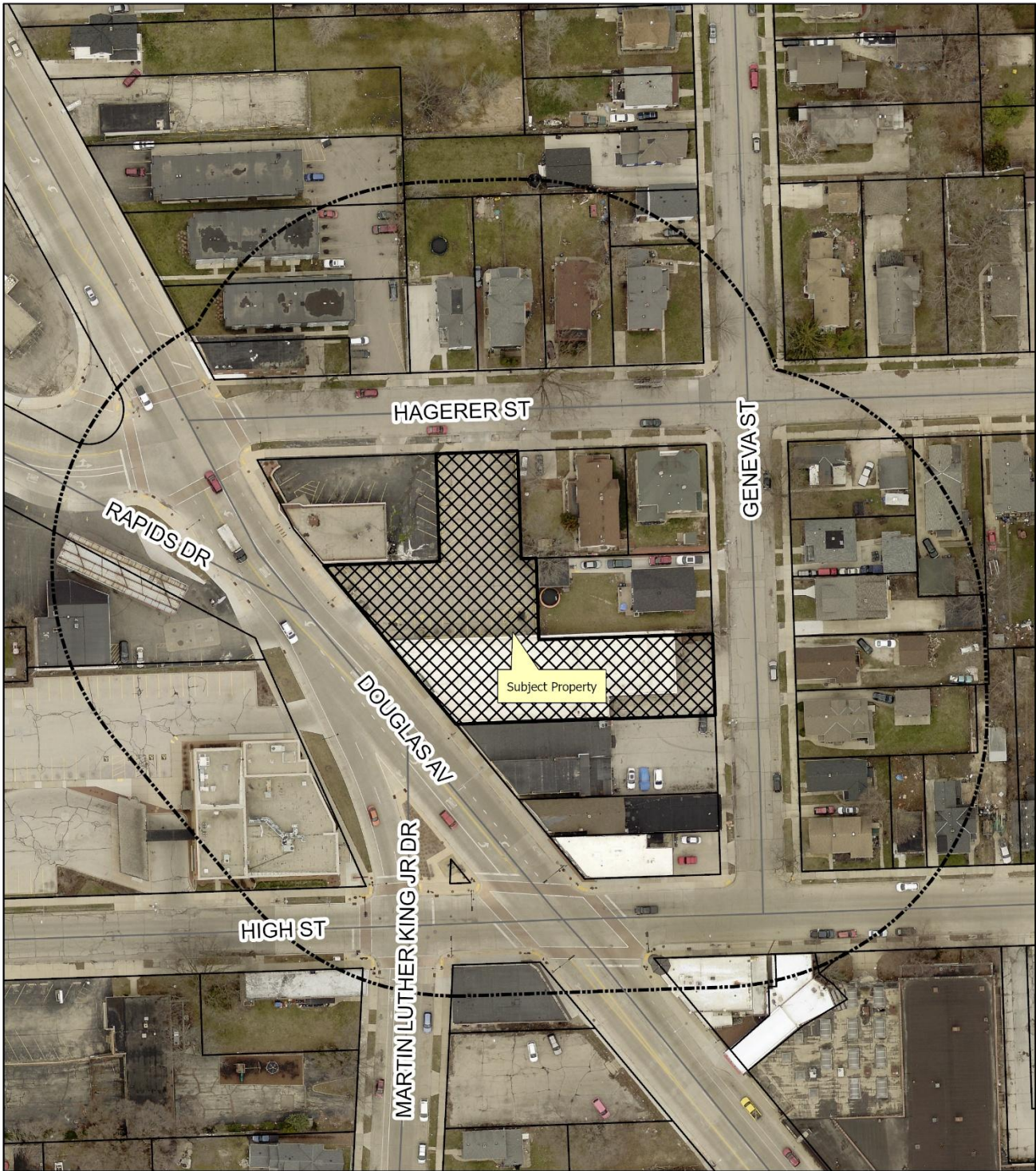


Conditional Use Permit - 1717 Douglas Ave



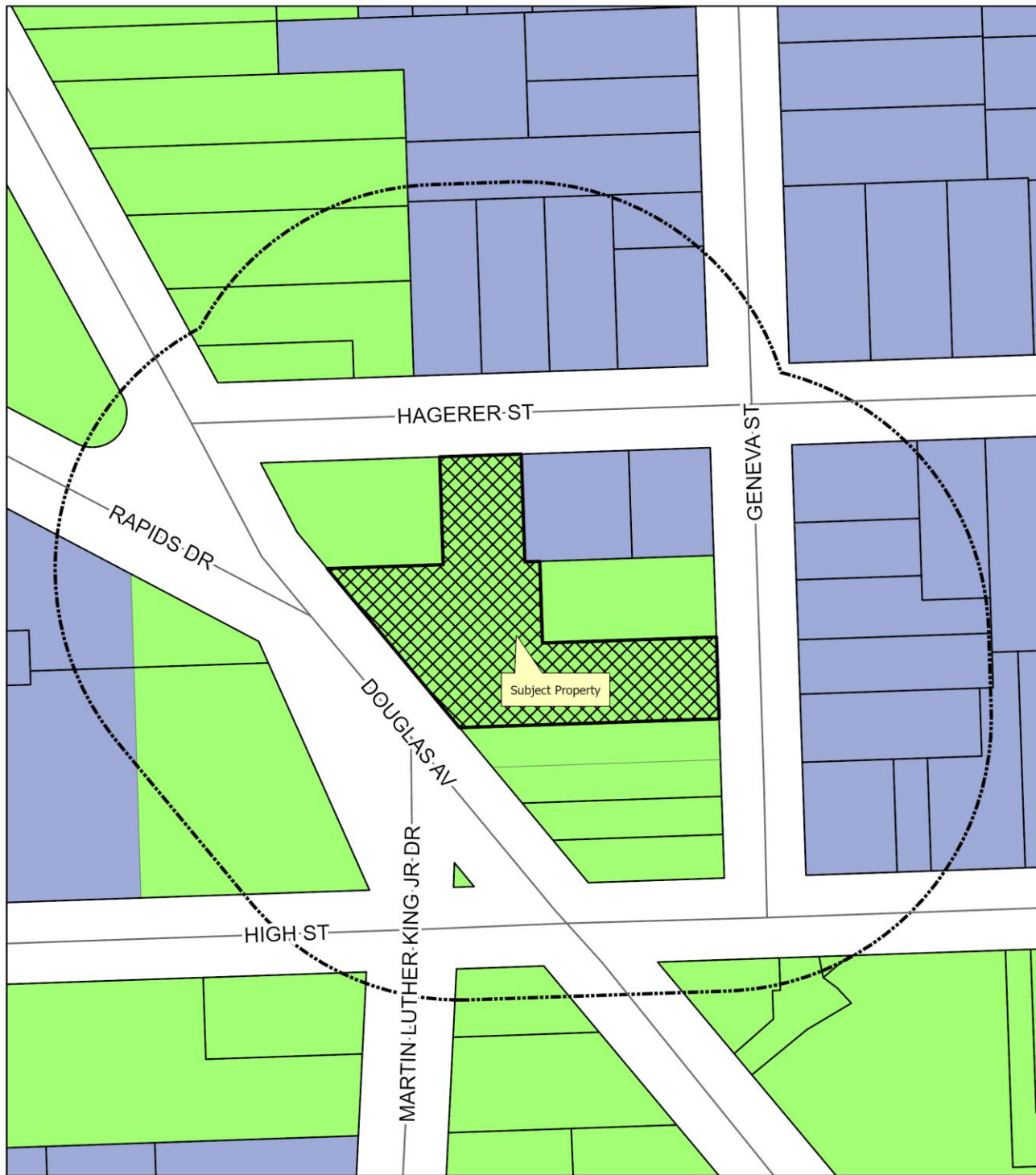


Conditional Use Permit - 1717 Douglas Ave





Conditional Use Permit - 1717 Douglas Ave

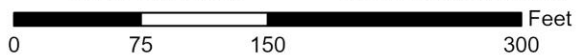


Zoning Designation

- B-2
- R-3

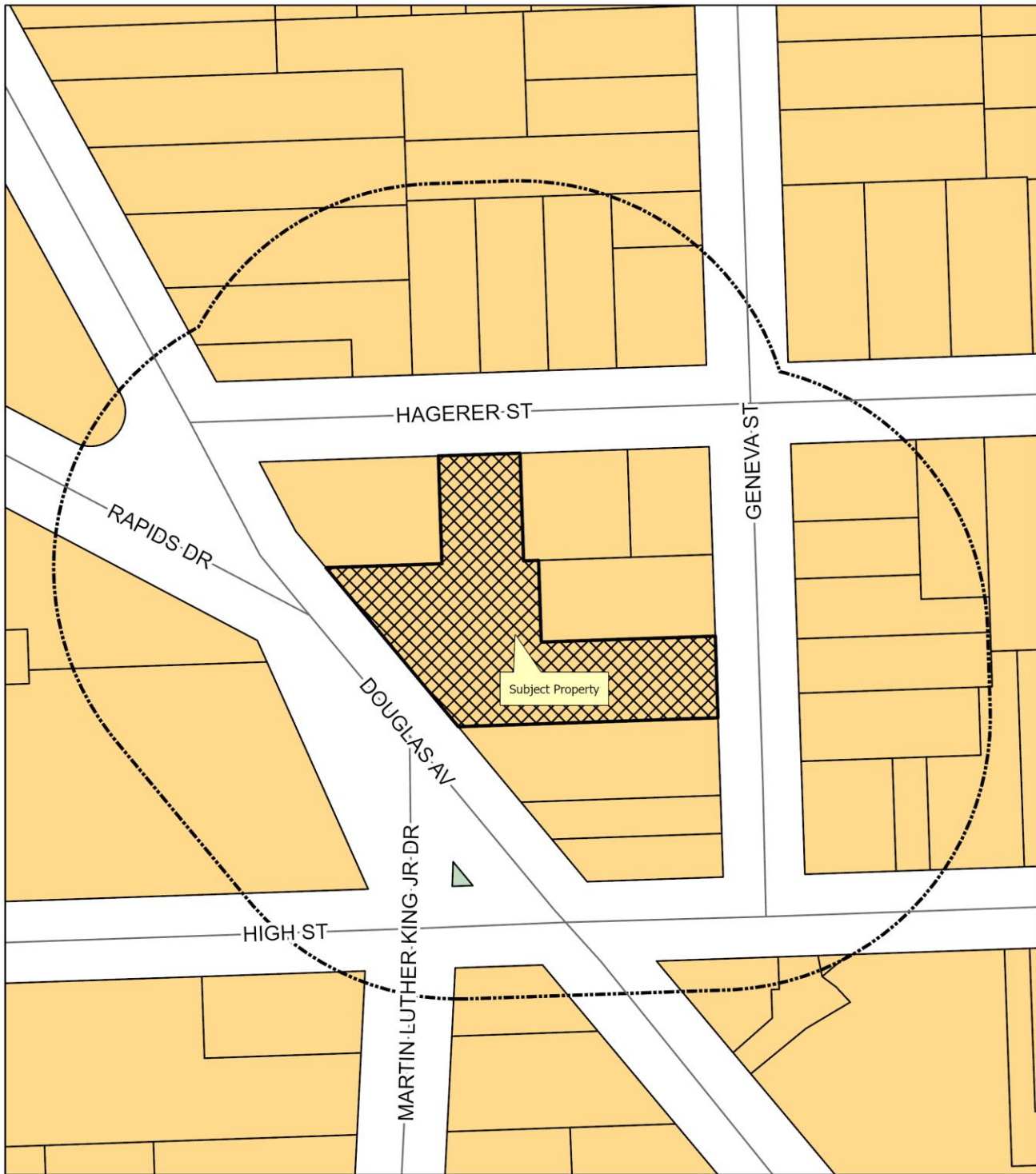
- Tax Parcel Boundary
- Street Centerlines

- Subject Property
- Notification Area





Conditional Use Permit - 1717 Douglas Ave



Land Use Designation
Medium Intensity

Tax Parcel Boundary
Street Centerlines

Subject Property
Notification Area

0 75 150 300 Feet



Site Photos



Looking southeast at Subject Property



Looking south along Douglas Avenue



Looking north along Douglas Avenue



Looking west from Subject Property