



CITY OF RACINE DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: 7/20/2026

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: 2005 Lathrop Avenue

Applicant: Alexie M. Martinez, representing El Cielo Church

Property Owner: LBJ Racine Realty, LLC

Request: Consideration of a minor amendment to a conditional use permit to operate a religious institution, classified as a Class 1 non-commercial-type use, in an existing building and tenant space at 2005 Lathrop Avenue for property located in a B-2 Community Shopping Zone District as required in section [114-468](#) of the Municipal Code.

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY: In February 2025, the PHDC approved a conditional use permit for a religious institution, classified as a Class 1 non-commercial time use on the ground floor, at 2005 Lathrop Avenue (tenant space addressed as 2051 Lathrop Avenue). Throughout the past several months, the applicant has been working with the landlord to have that space renovated and prepared for occupancy. Because of the current condition of the building, the applicant is requesting to use a separate tenant space (addressed as 2005 Lathrop Avenue) on the site while the original space is renovated.

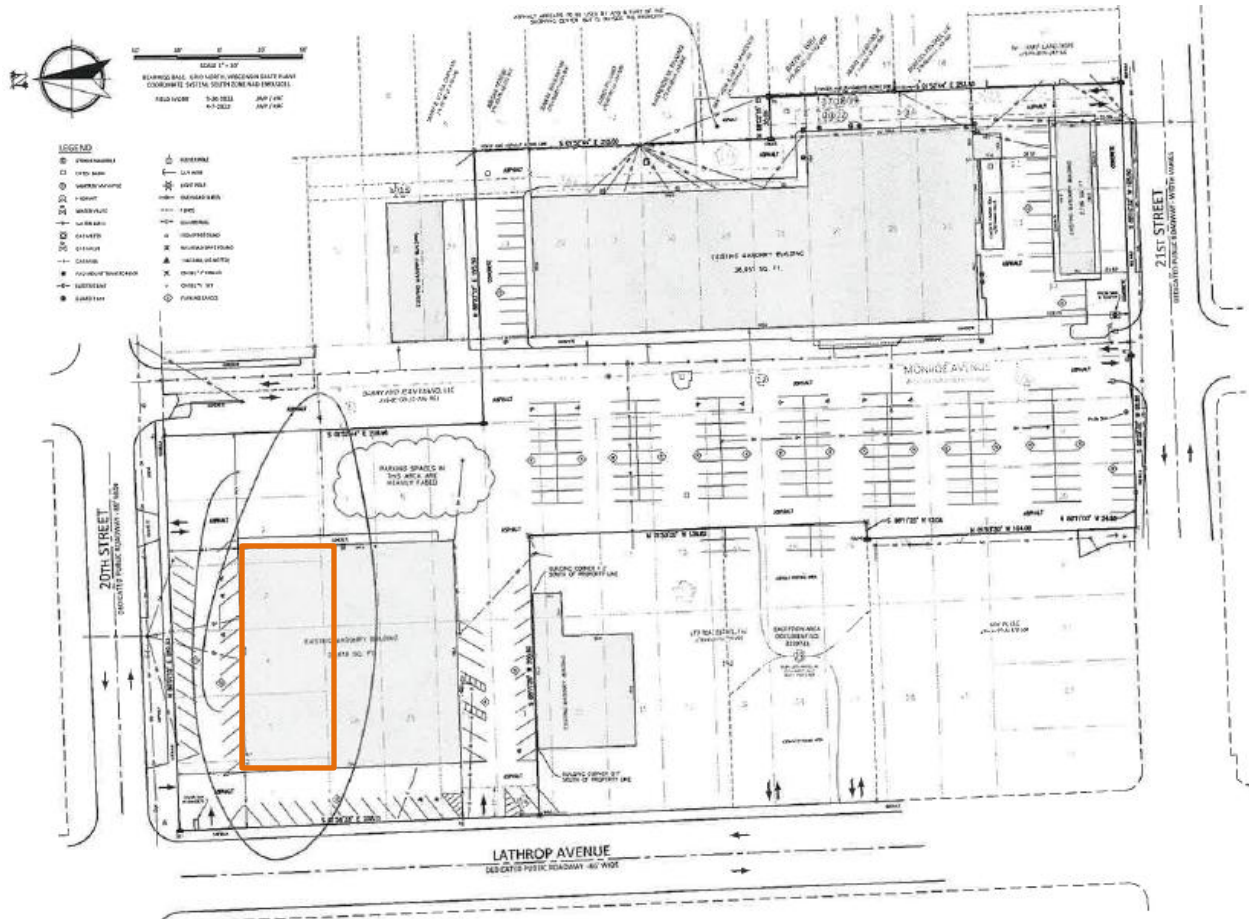
The applicant is proposing using the existing building at 2005 Lathrop Avenue to provide a religious institution, classified as a Class 1 non-commercial type use on the ground floor. The operation would be counseling services, leadership training, and adult and youth education services. The facility has proposed office hours of 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and

services on Sundays between 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Additional activities would take place on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings.

The Zoning Ordinance classifies this proposed religious institution as a Class 1 non-commercial-type use, defined in Section 114-1, as permissible in the B-2 Community Shopping Zone District upon the issuance of a conditional use permit (114-468).



Birdseye view of the property, indicated in red (image from City Pictometry). Space of the religious institution, outlined in **orange**. Note, Monroe Avenue does not run through this property.



Site Plan, submitted by application. North is to the right. Tenant space outlined in orange.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Parcel Number: [23786000](#)

Property Size: 4.8 acres

Comprehensive Plan Map Designation: Medium Intensity

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.

Corridor or Special Design District?: N/A

Historic?: N/A

Current Zoning District: B-2 Community Shopping

Purpose of Zone District: The B-2 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: Laundromat, retail uses, vacant tenant spaces for office and retail uses.

Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses:

North	B-2 Community Shopping	Gas Station/Auto repair
East	R-3 Limited General Residence	Single Unit Dwellings
South	R-2 Single Family Residence I-1 Restricted Industrial	Single Unit Dwellings Plumbing/HVAC Contractor
West	B-2 Community Shopping	Restaurant and Tavern

Operations: The facility has proposed office hours of 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and services on Sundays between 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Additional activities would take place on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings.

ANALYSIS:

Development Standards:

Density ([114-Article V](#): Article VII, Div. 5 [Bulk Regulations](#) & 8 [Lots](#)): There are no changes planned to the exterior of the building as a result of this proposal.

Standard	Required	Provided
Lot Area	No minimum	209,872 square feet
Lot Frontage	30 feet	317 feet
Floor Area Ratio	4.0 maximum	.32

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

Yard	Required	Provided
Front (south)	0 feet	15 feet
Side (west)	0 feet	35 feet
Side (east)	0 feet	25 feet
Rear (north)	0 feet	48 feet

Building design standards (114-Secs. [735.5](#) & [736](#)): The building on the parcel complies with the requirements of 114.735.5.b.1, however this request does not include any new buildings or modifications to the existing building.

Off-street parking and loading requirements (114- [Article XI](#)) :

Use Type	Required	Provided
Church	42 (1 space per 6 seats)	130
Total	42	130*

*The shopping center has approximately 130 dedicated spaces to the retail and office uses on the site.

Two dedicated loading spaces are required based on the size of the entirety of the building. The loading spaces already existing on the lot meets this requirement.

Landscaping, screening and yard requirements ([114- Article V](#): Article VII, Div. 6 [Development Standards](#) & 7 [Fences and Walls](#)): 114-734 (a) requires screening along the east property line because the adjacent lots are residentially zoned. The fencing on the site meets the intent of this section of the ordinance.

Sign Regulations (114-[Article X](#)): Any signage will need to comply with the requirements for the shopping center and meet the requirements, below.

Sign Type	Allowable Sq. Ft.
Projecting/Wall	300 square feet
Window signs	50% of window area^
Alleyway Signage	N/A
Total	300 square feet*

*Total size determination would be made based on sizes and types of other signage on the lot.

^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 applicant is not proposing any changing to lighting. The current 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](#)): All trash pickup occurs behind the building and the dumpsters and other trash storage are screened from public view by a fence and the building itself.

Engineering, Utilities and Access:

Access ([114-1151](#)): Vehicular access to the site is provided from driveways off Lathrop Avenue, 20th Street and 21st Street. Much of the traffic for the church will utilize the drive off 20th Street. The site plan submitted by the applicant does not contemplate any changes to access.

Surface drainage ([114-739](#) & Consult Engineering Dept.): Reuse of the building is not expected to impact the surface drainage of this 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: No exceptions are required for this proposal.

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 establishment of a religious use in a section of building that has been vacant for several years is not expected to be a detriment to the public safety, health or general welfare of the area or community in general. The PHDC approved the use for the shopping center in 2025 agreeing that this type of facility could be an asset to the area and those living in the neighborhood. The minor amendment will allow for the operation to continue while the original space for the CUP is renovated.

This location is easily accessible to the surrounding area and is expected to be an enhancement to the neighborhood, not a detriment. Given the proximity to residential development, the operations are less intensive than many commercial uses allowed by right in this zone district.

- 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. There is not expected to be any adverse impacts as a result of reusing this long-standing vacant building in the manner proposed by the applicant; the use is not expected to generate loud noise and will fit within the footprint of the area which it will be leasing. The property will still look, act and function like that of a commercial use with the religious institution leasing a small portion of the overall footprint.

- 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 operations proposed by the applicant ensure that the property is used more like that of an office type use (which is permitted in this zone) with regular hours maintaining the appearance of a commercial use. Business districts are intended for commerce and more active uses; the hours of operation in conjunction with the services being offered by this religious institution will meet the intent of the ordinance, which is that non- commercial type uses function as close to commercial development as possible.

- 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 access, utilities or drainage for the site. The reuse 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 ingress and egress from the site is expected to be appropriate to handle this demand and the on-site parking is adequate to accommodate the proposed use and other uses within the shopping center. Access to the site would occur from Lathrop Avenue, 20th Street, and 21st Street.

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

Staff Comments: The land use plan for the City identifies this property as Commercial. This proposed usage is consistent with the objectives of the comprehensive plan and is of a lesser intensity than other uses allowed in this zone district. If the property is utilized as proposed, it will be generally as active as a lower intensity commercial use.

- 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: It is expected that this establishment will operate in accordance with the applicable regulations for this zone district. No exceptions are needed with this request and the proposed development is expected to fit with the mix of uses allowed to occur in the surrounding area.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR THE PLANNING 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, subject to the consent of the applicant.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF FACT IN THIS REPORT, THAT THE REQUEST FROM ALEX MARTINEZ, REPRESENTING EL CIELO CHURCH, SEEKING A MINOR AMENDMENT TO A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 2005 LATHROP AVENUE TO ALLOW FOR THE TEMPORARY USE FOR A NON-COMMERCIAL TYPE USE OFFERING WORSHIP SERVICES, COUNSELING SERVICES, EDUCATIONAL, AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN B-2 COMMUNITY SHOPPING DISTRICT BE APPROVED, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

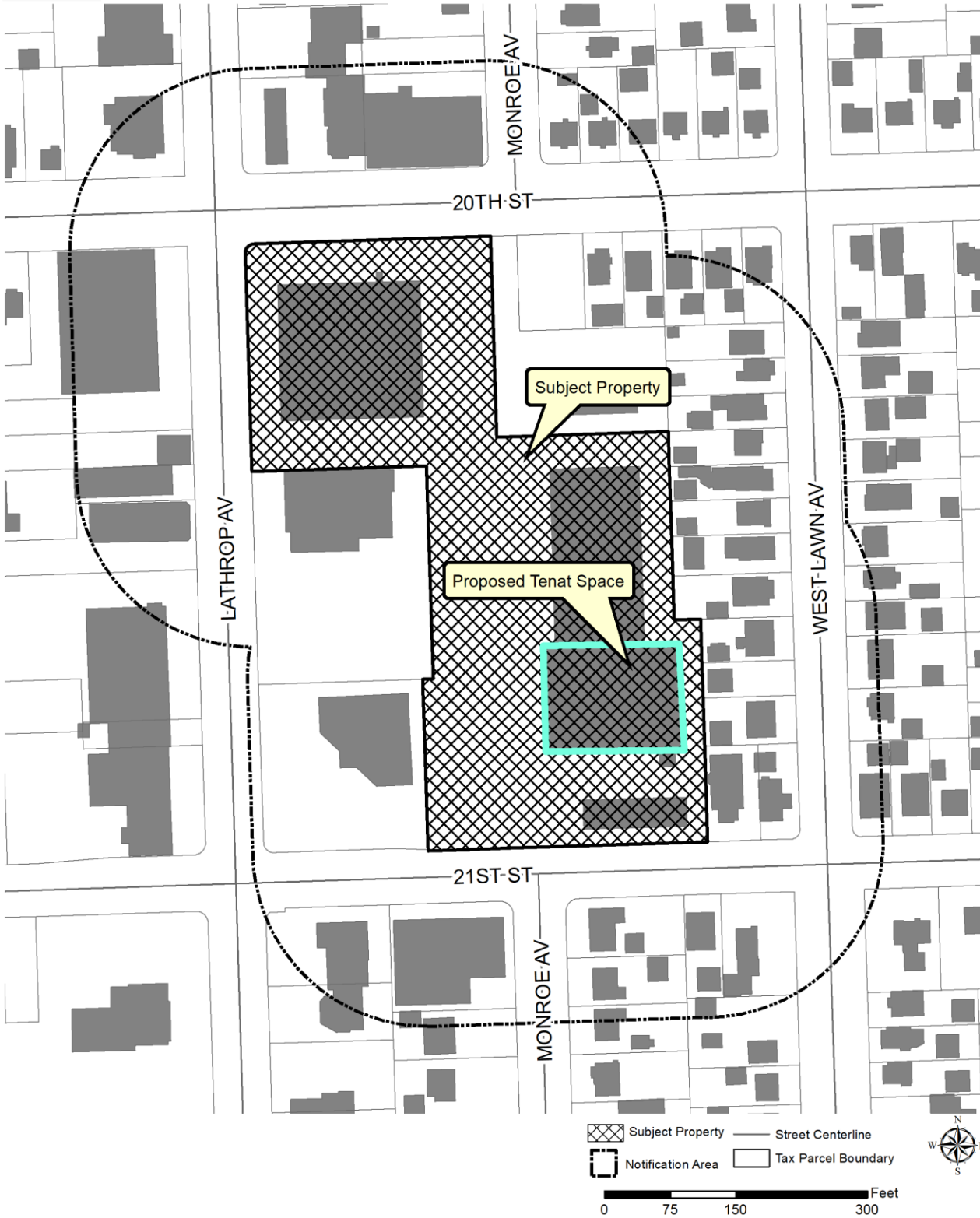
- a) That the plans presented to the Planning, Heritage and Design Commission on July 20, 2026 be approved subject to the conditions contained herein.
- b) That no string or LED lights be placed in interior or exterior of windows or as building accent lighting.
- c) That all trailers, construction equipment, and outdoor storage be removed from the site prior to the issuance of an occupancy permit.
- d) That the use of the alternate tenant space be authorized for no more than 12 months from the date of approval, or July 20, 2027. After that date this conditional use permit becomes null and void.
- e) That all codes and ordinances are complied with and required permits acquired.
- f) That no minor changes be made from the conditions of this permit without 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.
- g) 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)

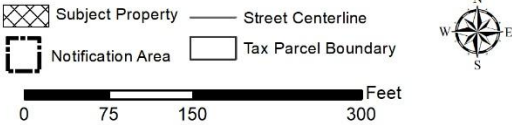


Conditional Use Permit - 2051 Lathrop



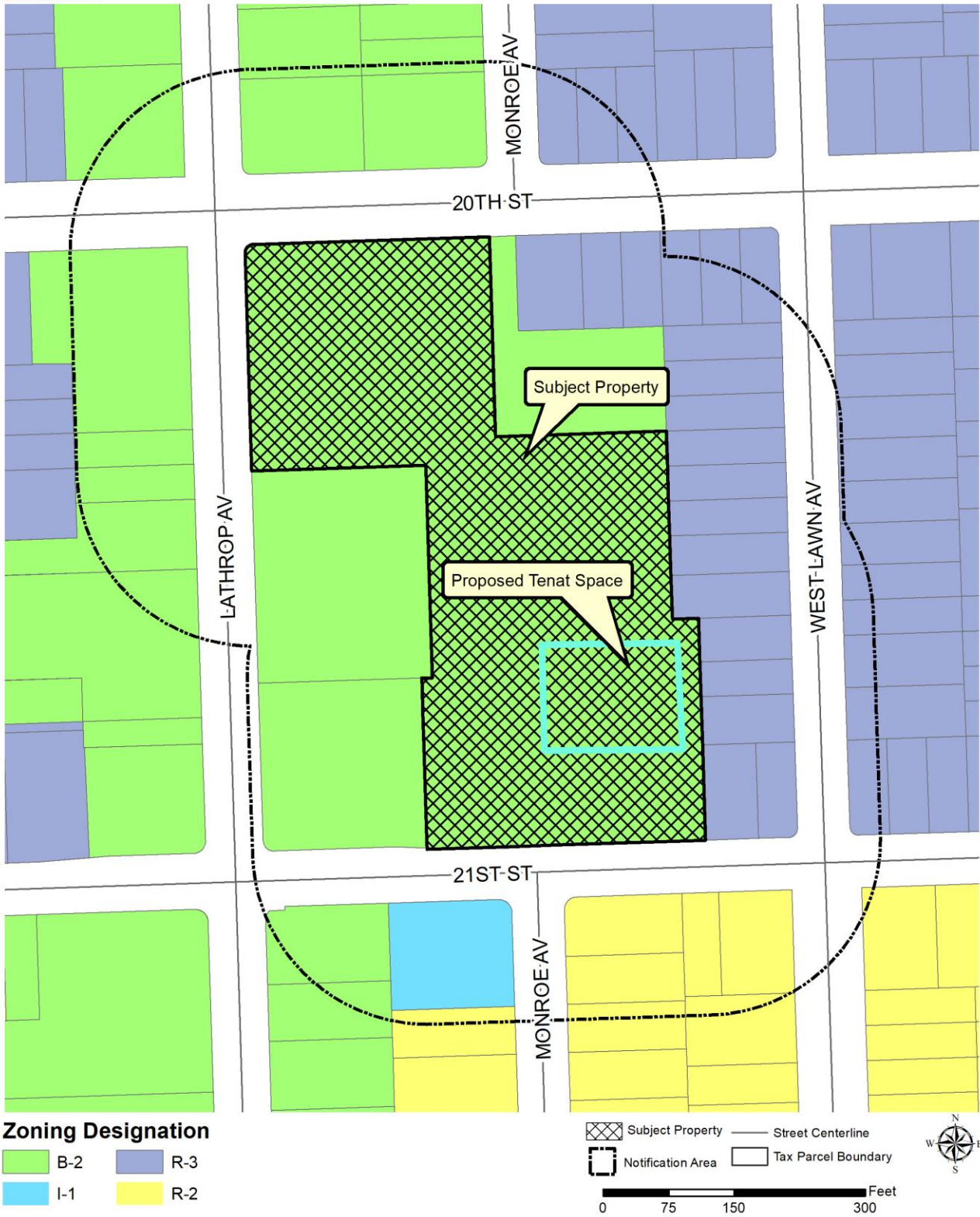


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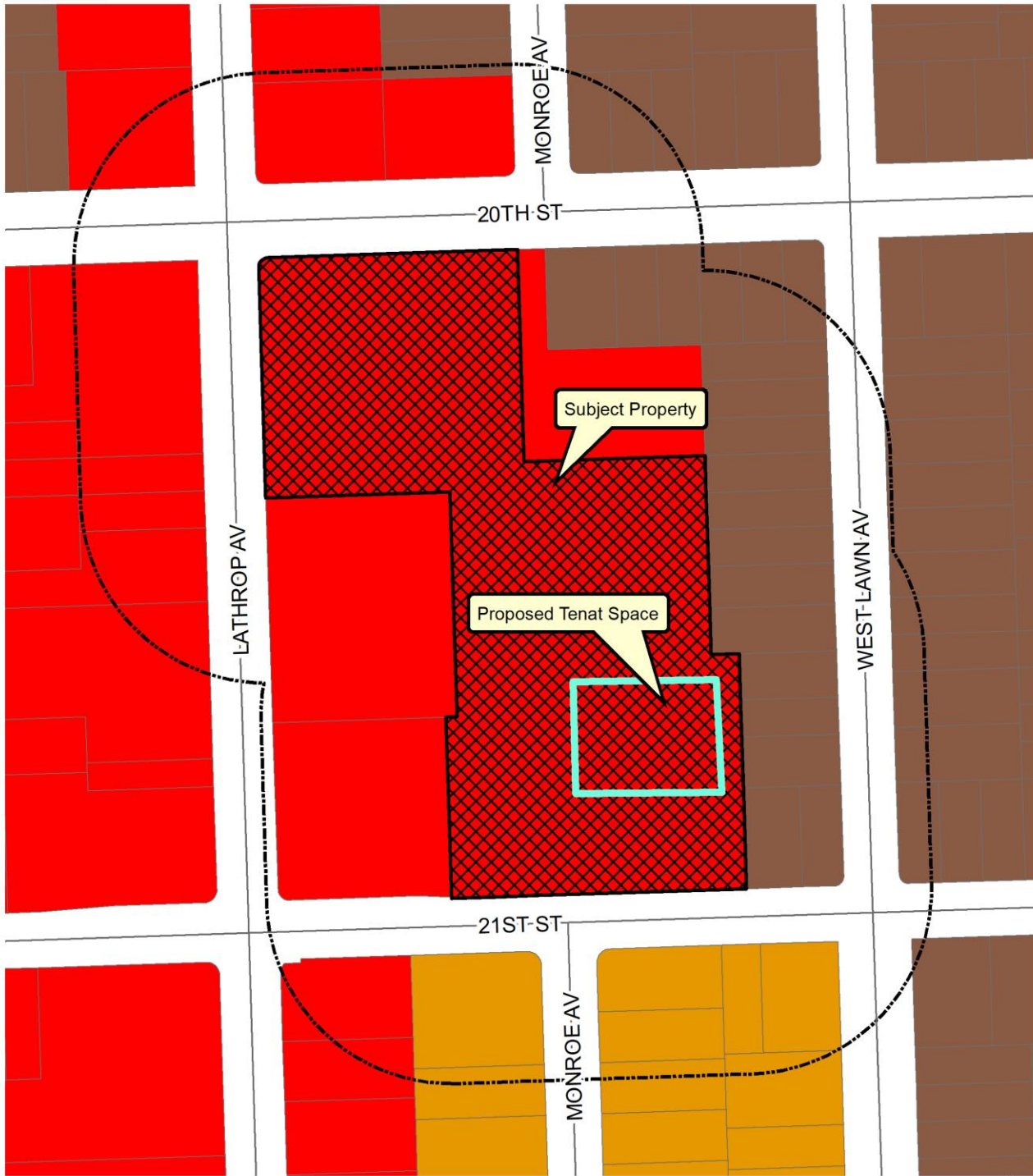


Conditional Use Permit - 2051 Lathrop





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Land Use Designation

- Commercial
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential

- Subject Property
 - Notification Area
 - Street Centerline
 - Tax Parcel Boundary
- 0 75 150 300 Feet



Site Photos



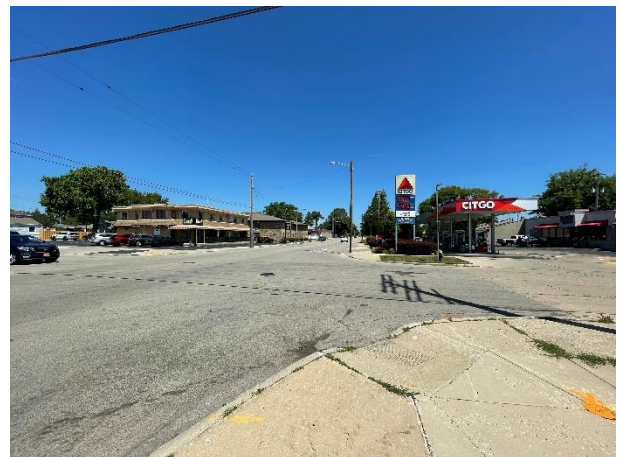
Looking southeast at subject property



Looking south at subject property



Looking south down Lathrop Avenue
from Subject Property



Looking north down Lathrop Avenue
from Subject Property