



**PLANNING & ZONING REPORT**  
**Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting of January 21, 2026**

**File # 050-25**

**APPLICANT:** Carmel Smith  
**LOCATION:** 1211 West Street  
**REQUESTED ACTION:** A Zoning Map Amendment from R-1, Single-family Residential Zoning District to R-2, Two-family Residential Zoning District.  
**EXISTING USE:** Vacant lot  
**PROPOSED USE:** New construction duplex  
**DIMENSIONS:** See attached Exhibit C.

**ADJACENT ZONING AND LAND USES:**

|        |      |  |
|--------|------|--|
| NORTH: | R-1; | Single-family residences and Vacant land |
| EAST:  | R-1; | Single-family residences                 |
| SOUTH: | R-1; | Single-family residences                 |
| WEST:  | R-1; | Single-family residences and Vacant land |

**YEAR 2040 PLAN:** RL Light Residential

**SOILS REPORT:** SWCD 26-25:  
Erosion Concerns

The proposed land use of this site is a triplex. It is currently a vacant grassland site. Soil disturbance will occur as a result of developing the site, which is moderately sloping and susceptible to erosion. Erosion control is important even for site footprints less than an acre.

Soil disturbance can create soil erosion which must be properly managed to prevent adverse environmental impacts. Erosion from construction sites is a leading cause of water quality problems in Illinois. Problems caused by this sediment include:

- increased flooding — Sediment build-up lowers the flow capacity of channels causing more frequent flooding in areas that rarely or never flooded before
- Financial burden to taxpayers - Sediment that finds its way into streets, storm sewers, and ditches result in additional maintenance costs for local, state and federal governments
- Water quality impairment - Sediment laden runoff transfers nutrients and other pollutants to downstream lakes and rivers degrading aquatic habitats and increasing costs for water treatment.

Simple but effective controls include preserving existing trees and grass where possible, using silt fence to trap sediment on the down slope sides of

the area of disturbance, using a gravel drive used by all vehicles to limit tracking of mud onto streets, cleaning up sediment carried off-site by vehicles or storms, installing curb inlet controls, using downspout extenders to prevent roof runoff from eroding exposed soil, locating soil piles away from any roads or waterways, and reseeding or sodding the site as soon as possible. The materials (silt fence, stakes, gravel entrance, inlet controls, and grass seed) are easy to find and relatively inexpensive.

The Illinois Urban Manual is a resource of practices used throughout the State and can be accessed at <https://illinoisurbanmanual.org/>. The concept of these practices can be carried over to good housekeeping measures after development occurs and buildings are occupied to prevent stormwater runoff from becoming contaminated.

#### Surface and Groundwater Contamination from Heavy Equipment and Vehicle Traffic

There may be several vehicles moving on and stored on the site. Most of construction vehicles are heavy duty pieces of equipment, with high capacity fuel tanks and large hydraulic oil reservoirs. Due to bedrock being at or near the soil surface, absorbents should be readily available in the event of a spill or leak to promptly contain hazards that would otherwise be environmentally harmful to groundwater recharge areas. Personnel should be properly trained to contain and clean up any spills. They should periodically check for indications of leaks or spills under or around vehicles and fix issues to prevent further contamination.

Properly label, store and dispose of all fluids and other hazardous chemicals to avoid environmental contamination. Keep storage containers off the ground to avoid stormwater contamination. Any fuel storage areas should be properly located away from high traffic areas; and have secondary containment.

Prevent stormwater from washing contaminants off the site in the event of a storm. Contaminants on impermeable surfaces (concrete, asphalt, rooftops, etc.) will wash off with rain and will eventually make its way into drainage ways which go directly to natural surface water areas (ditch, creek, river, etc.) without treatment. Avoid washing impermeable surfaces off with a hose, but rather use a broom and dispose of waste versus having contaminants wash off the site.

#### Rusty Patch Bumble Bee

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the rusty patched bumble bee as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Endangered species are animals and plants that are in danger of becoming extinct. The rusty patch bumble bee is a pollinator that lives in prairies and grasslands which are one of the last species to go into hibernation. They need areas that provide nectar and pollen from flowers, nesting sites (underground), and overwintering sites for hibernating queens (undisturbed soil).

Many factors have led to the rust patch bumble bee becoming an endangered species. Most of prairies and grasslands of the Upper Midwest and Northeast have been converted to monoculture farms or developed areas, such as cities and roads. Grasslands that remain tend to be small and isolated. Increases in farm size and technology advances improved the operating efficiency of farms but have led to practices that harm bumble bees, including increased use of pesticides, loss of crop diversity which results in flowering crops being available for only a short time, loss of hedgerows and the flowers that grew there, and loss of legume pastures.

There are numerous programs, research, and groups working towards helping the rusty patch bumble bee. Some things you can do to help include having flowering plants, providing natural areas with native plants, and minimize the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizer.

For more information Visit:

<https://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/insects/rpbb/factsh>

#### Native Plantings

Native plants like grasses and flowers provide critical habitat for many key species like the Rusty Patch Bumble Bee and Monarch Butterflies. These deep-rooted native species are preferred because of their abilities to enhance soil permeability and pollutant filtering and their reduced needs for fertilizer, herbicides, irrigation, and mowing. Unfortunately, loss and degradation due to the development of the land and an invasion of exotic species is a serious problem in Illinois.

#### Woodland Information

The Winnebago County Soil and Water Conservation District encourages preserving as much of the wooded character of this site as possible. Long-term preservation of the trees will require taking certain precautions during and after construction. The ground around each tree to be saved should be flagged or fenced off. Also, it should be protected from heavy machinery. This area should be at least as wide as the area covered by the spread of the tree branches. Soil compaction around the roots of the trees can permanently interfere with the uptake of oxygen, nutrients, and water. This may cause the premature death of the trees. The placement of fill material around the trunks of trees can have the same adverse effects. Other construction practices to avoid near the trees are: cutting and filling, raising the soil level, and removing neighboring trees. Contractors and construction crews should be informed of all tree preservation efforts.

**HISTORY:** No relevant history.

**REVIEW COMMENTS:** The Applicant is requesting a Zoning Map Amendment from R-1, Single-family Residential Zoning District to R-2, Two-family Residential Zoning District. Exhibit A shows the subject property is located on the west side of West Street and 140 feet south of the Loomis Street and West Street intersection. The subject property is surrounded by residential uses (Exhibits B & C).

The Applicant, Carmel Smith, is the owner of the subject property. The Applicant is proposing to establish a residential structure for the subject property through a Zoning Map Amendment from R-1, Single-family Residential Zoning District to R-2, Two-family Residential Zoning District.

The primary purpose of the R-2, Two-family Residential Zoning District, is to accommodate a one-family detached dwelling and two-family structures with a maximum gross density of 11.31 dwelling units per acre.

Exhibit C is an aerial of the subject property and adjacent lands. The subject property currently is vacant land. The Applicant has not submitted a detailed site plan at this time but simply indicated on the zoning application that future use would be residential in nature. As such, any future development would need to comply with the R-2 District and the Zoning Ordinance.

After review of the zoning request, Staff feels that the Applicant's proposed request is consistent with the 2040 Plan and the proposed development is located within an area of similar uses. There are many two-family residences within the neighborhood and the area north of Loomis is currently zoned R-2; therefore, Staff supports this request.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends APPROVAL of a Zoning Map Amendment from R-1, Single-family Residential Zoning District to R-2, Two-family Residential Zoning District, based on the following condition:

1. Garages can only have access off of the alley.

See attached findings of fact.

SC: DM 01/12/2026

**FINDINGS OF FACT FOR APPROVAL OF A ZONING MAP AMENDMENT**  
**FROM R-1, SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT**  
**TO R-2, TWO-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT**  
**LOCATED AT 1211 WEST STREET**

**Approval** of this Zoning Map Amendment is based upon the following findings:

- 1) The proposed Zoning Map change is consistent with Article II, Intent and Purpose, of the Rockford Zoning Ordinance for the following reasons:
  - a. This proposal promotes the health, safety, comfort, convenience, morals and general welfare for the citizens of Rockford because it is consistent with the comprehensive plan and surrounding uses;
  - b. This proposal protects the character, scale and stability of the adjacent residential and commercial because the proposed development will meet all development requirements of this site; and
  - c. The proposed map amendment would allow for a reasonable development to take place consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.
- 2) The proposed Zoning Map Amendment is consistent with the approved general plan, the Year 2040 Plan, for the area. The 2040 Plan designates this property as RL, Light Residential.

Exhibit A  
1211 West Street  
ZMA  
#050-25

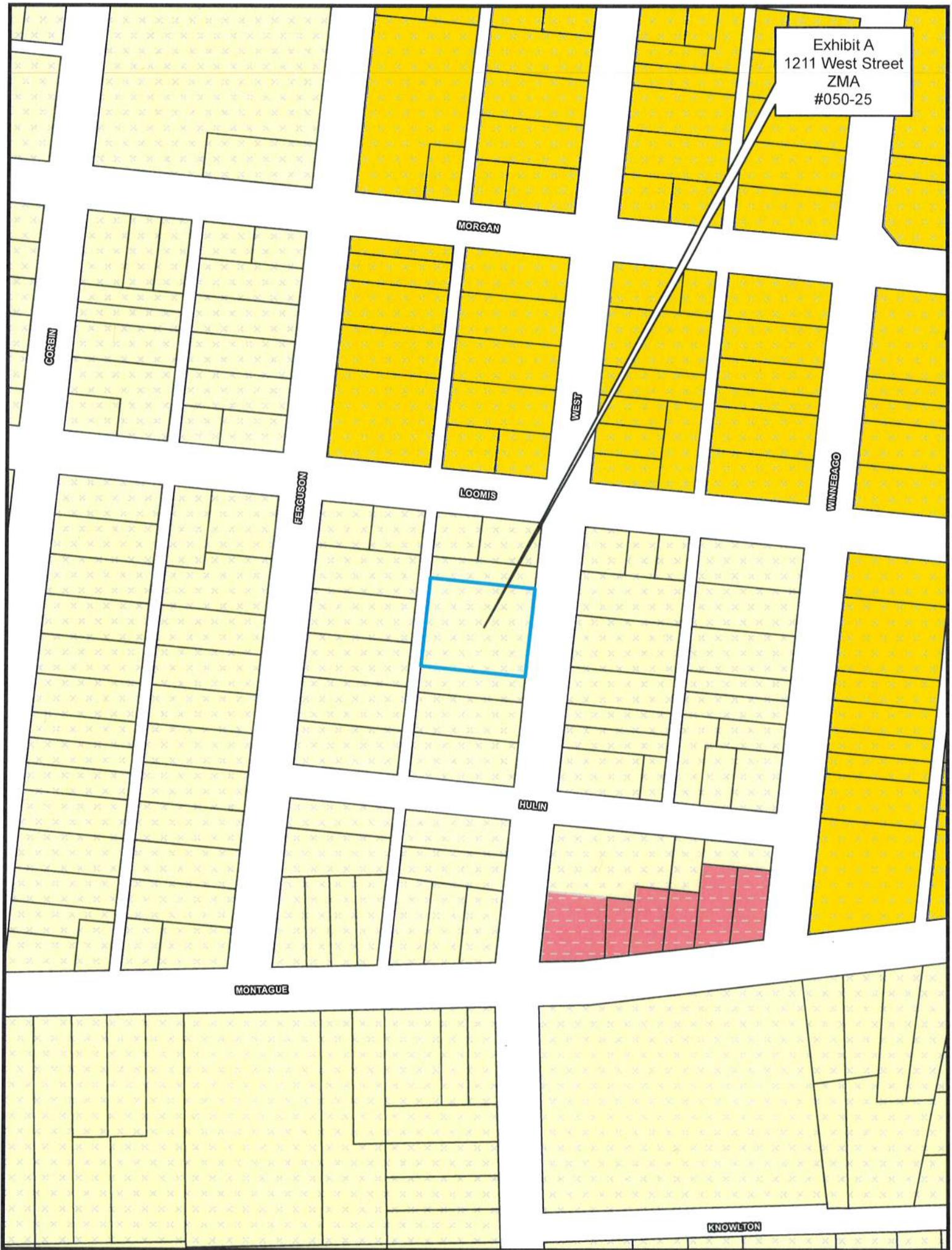


Exhibit B  
1211 West Street  
ZMA  
#050-25

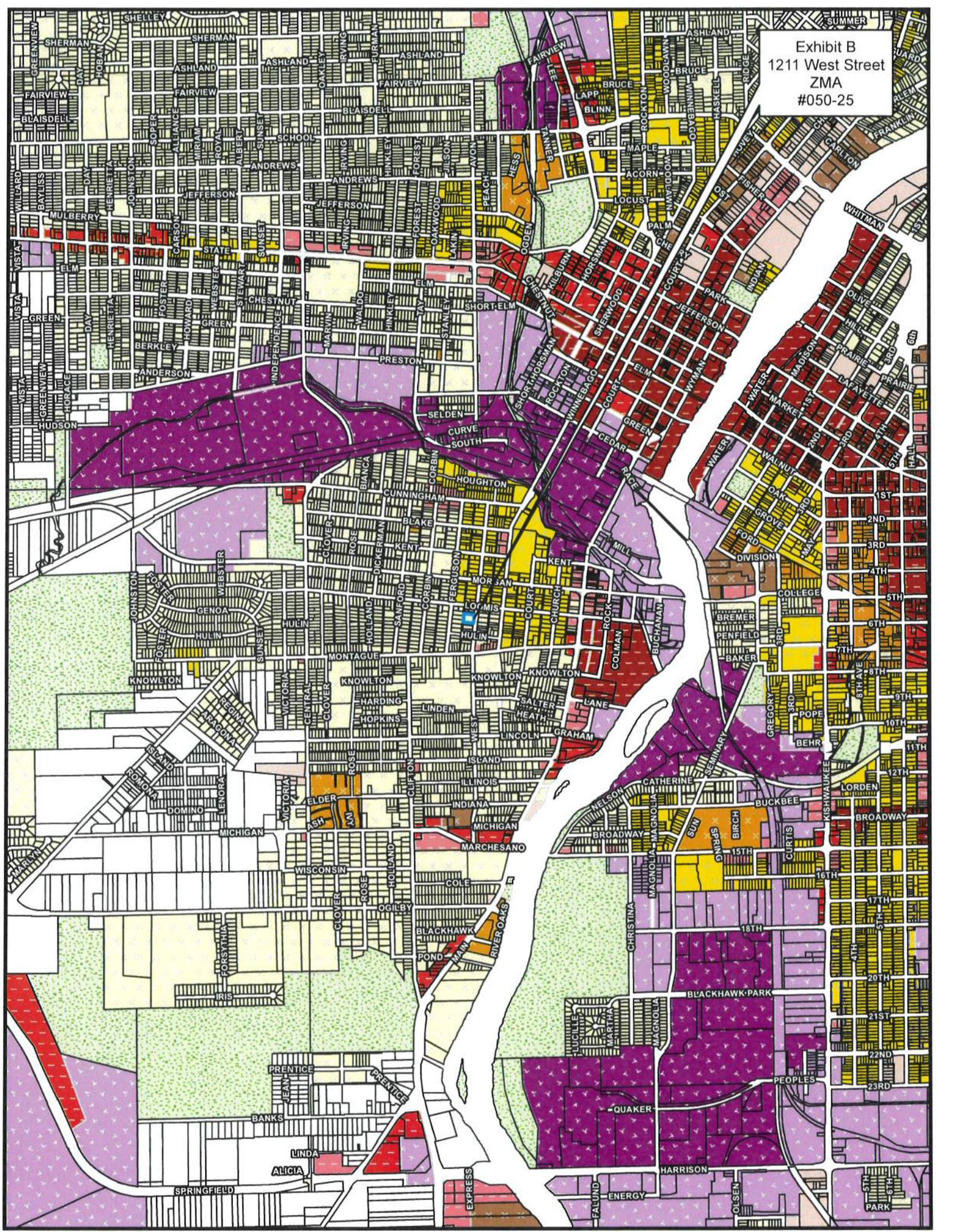


Exhibit C  
1211 West Street  
ZMA  
#050-25

