



PLANNING & ZONING REPORT

Liquor and Tobacco Advisory Board Meeting of May 19, 2026

File # 026-LTAB-015

APPLICANT: Shawn Cox / Elizabeth Cox / Copper Lantern, LLC dba Cooper Lantern

LOCATION: 716 Indiana Avenue

REQUESTED ACTION: The sale of liquor by the drink (Class NG-L) in conjunction with special event space in an R-4, Multi-family Residential Zoning District.

EXISTING USES: Vacant building (former Rockford Lithuanian Club)

PROPOSED USES: Event Space for receptions, cultural events and celebrations of life

DIMENSIONS: Irregular shape **SQUARE FOOTAGE:** 2.13 acres

ADJACENT ZONING AND LAND USES:

NORTH:	R-1	Single-family residences
EAST:	R-1	True Vine M.B. Church, Single-family residences
SOUTH:	C-3	Vacant Funeral Home, ComEd substation
WEST:	R-1, R-4, C-3	Single-family residences, Vacant land, UW Health Clinic

YEAR 2040 PLAN: C Commercial and Retail

HISTORY: **File #048-25:** A Special Use Permit for a Planned Unit Development for an event space for receptions, cultural events and celebrations of life in an R-4, Multi-family Residential Zoning District was approved February 4, 2026 for the property located at 716 Indiana Avenue. This is the subject property.

File #024-LTAB-023: The sale of beer and wine by the drink (Class WB50) in conjunction with a restaurant and video gaming terminals in a C-3, General Commercial Zoning District was approved August 6, 2024 for the property located at 2019 South Main Street. This property is located two (2) blocks southeast of the subject property.

File #014-LAB-031: The sale of beer and wine by the drink in conjunction with a restaurant and lounge with a video gaming facility in a C-3, Commercial General District was withdrawn in 2014 for the property located at 2019 and 2021 South Main Street. This property is located two (2) blocks southeast of the subject property.

File #012-LAB-009: The sale of packaged liquor in conjunction with a grocery store and the sale of liquor by the drink in conjunction with a restaurant in a C-3, Commercial General District was denied on November

19, 2012 for the property located at 519 Marchesano Drive. This property is located directly southwest of the subject property.

File #011-LAB-023: The sale of packaged liquor in conjunction with a grocery store and the sale of beer and wine by the drink in conjunction with a deli in a C-4, Urban Mixed-Use District were approved on November 17, 2011 for the property located at 1414 South Main Street. This is six (6) blocks northeast of the subject property.

REVIEW COMMENTS: The Applicants are requesting the sale of liquor by the drink (Class NG-L) in conjunction with special event space in an R-4, Multi-family Residential Zoning District. Exhibit A shows that the subject property is located on the southwest corner of Indiana Avenue and West Street. The neighborhood is a mixture of commercial and residential uses (Exhibits B and C).

The subject property was constructed in the 1953 as a social club known as the Rockford Lithuanian Club. Currently, the building is vacant. The Applicant has purchased the property, it was recently approved as an event space and they are now looking to acquire a license for the sale of liquor by the drink. For that reason, the Applicants are requesting a review of the Liquor License application by the Liquor and Tobacco Advisory Board.

As part of the review, it is required by the Applicant to submit a completed liquor license application along with a business plan. Additional items are presented for the use approval regarding the site and intended business.

Exhibit D is the map identifying businesses with a liquor license. The yellow dots identify the sale of beer and wine by the drink. The green dot is for a full liquor license for the sale of liquor by the drink. The red dot is for packaged liquor sales. The large star is the subject property.

The Applicant submitted Exhibit E which is a proposed site plan of the subject property. The property was built with the majority of the parking lot occupying the property and the building has some existing green areas around the building. The subject property is zoned R-4 and parking is required in this zoning district. A special event space facility is required to provide parking at one space per 60 square feet. Exhibit E shows 84 parking spaces. Staff is unsure of the actual number of parking spaces as Exhibit D does not show the entire parking lot striped but does indicate plenty of overflow parking. However, this lot was adequate when the Rockford Lithuanian Club occupied the building so Staff feels parking should not be an issue. Exhibit E appears to show the terrace parking in the Right-of-Way being removed and replaced with topsoil and grass seed. A site and landscaping plan addressing the removal of the terrace parking and the replacement with topsoil and grass seed should be submitted for Staff's review and approval as this was a condition of approval for the event space. Additionally, Exhibit E shows a dumpster enclosure in the parking lot, which is a suitable location.

Additionally, Exhibit E is the landscaping plan. Exhibit E shows perimeter landscaping along Indiana Avenue, along a portion of West Street and along a portion west property line. Exhibit E is proposing 15 Honey Locust shade trees. Additionally, Exhibit E is proposing 2,370 Landscape Units for

Perimeter Landscaping along Indiana Avenue. Finally, Exhibit E is proposing 1,620 Landscape Units for Perimeter Landscaping along West Street. Although the proposed perimeter landscaping is a vast improvement over the existing conditions there are still a few areas that will need to be improved. The perimeter landscaping will need to replace the first parking space along Indiana Avenue directly east and west of the building. These two (2) parking spaces can be added to the row of parking along West Street. Additionally, the proposed landscape island in the middle of the proposed parking spaces south and east of the eastern most access point along Indiana Avenue can be removed as it would not be necessary. A site and landscaping plan addressing the landscaping issues, striping of parking stalls and the proposed shade trees and perimeter landscaping should be submitted for Staff's review and approval as this was a condition of approval for the event space as well.

Exhibit F is the interior floor plan. The main entrance is from the Indiana Avenue side of the building and there are additional exits off the sides and rear. Exhibit F shows there will be an event area, stage, bar with stools, a seating area, storage areas, kitchen area and bathrooms.

Exhibit G is the business plan for Copper Lantern describing how the Applicant intends to run the event space. The principal use of the property will be to host special events for life's most meaningful celebrations from elegant weddings and quinceaneras to timeless gatherings. The hours of operation will be Tuesday and Wednesday 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Thursday through Saturday 2:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. (midnight) and Sunday 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The drink menu will consist of beer, wine, champagne, liquor and cocktails (Exhibit G).

Exhibit G further explains all employees will be Basset certified, there will be 8 cameras for the interior and exterior of the building and security staff will be employed during the weekend events (Exhibit G). The anticipated ratio of sales would be 85% alcohol, 10% non-alcoholic beverages and 2% food/catering coordination fees. However, liquor sales and/or consumption is prohibited until a liquor license has been approved for the subject property and business or a caterer with a current liquor license is used. The Applicants state, "through thoughtful restoration and community collaboration, we create a welcoming and diverse venue where every celebration brings positivity to our City's story" Exhibit G).

Exhibit H is the service calls for the last two (2) years. There were three (3) calls for service at 716 Indiana Avenue.

Staff feels that the Applicant's request is reasonable and recommends approval of the Applicant's request subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends APPROVAL of the sale of liquor by the drink (Class NG-L) in conjunction with special event space in an R-4, Multi-family Residential Zoning District., subject to the following conditions:

1. Meet all Applicable Building and Fire Codes.
2. Compliance with all City of Rockford Code of Ordinances including Liquor Codes.

3. Submittal of a site plan including a landscaping and striping plan for the for Staff's review and approval.
4. Installation of approved landscaping and parking lot striping by August 1, 2026.
5. Window display signage is limited to 20% of window area.
6. The windows shall not be covered with bars or other devices that block the windows.
7. The sale of liquor by the drink shall be limited to submitted Exhibit F.
8. The hours of operation will be Tuesday and Wednesday 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Thursday through Saturday 2:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. (midnight) and Sunday 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
9. Submittal of an updated site plan including a landscaping and striping plan for the parking lot for Staff's review and approval.
10. Installation of approved landscaping and parking lot striping by August 1, 2026.
11. Any future signage must comply with the current Ordinance.
12. Any pending general ordinance case(s) must be resolved prior to issuance of the license.
13. All outstanding general ordinance fines must be paid prior to the issuance of the license.
14. All conditions must be met prior to issuance of license and establishment of use.

SC:DM
5/11/2026

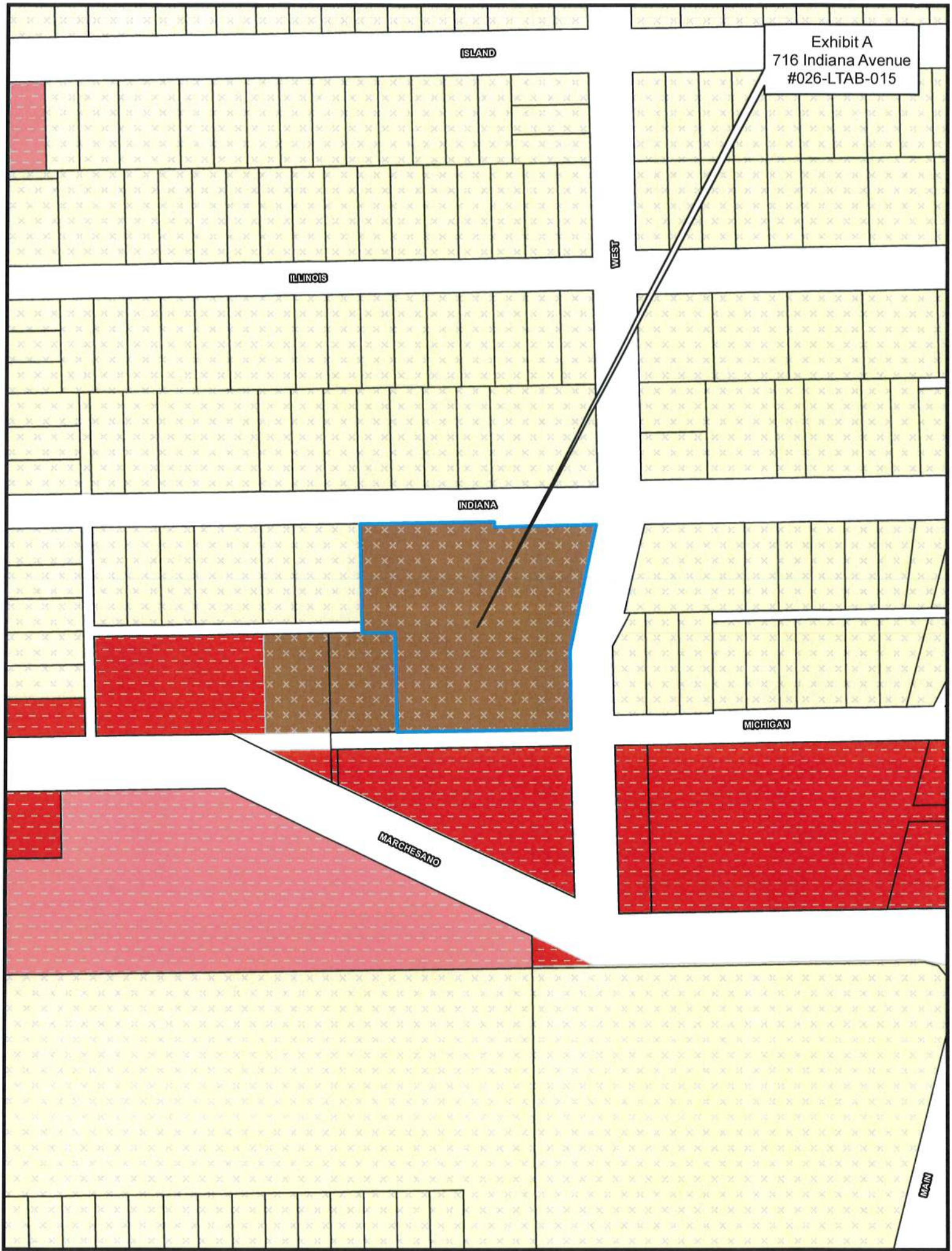


Exhibit A
716 Indiana Avenue
#026-LTAB-015

ISLAND

ILLINOIS

INDIANA

MICHIGAN

MARCHESANO

WEST

MAN

Exhibit B
716 Indiana Avenue
#026-LTAB-015

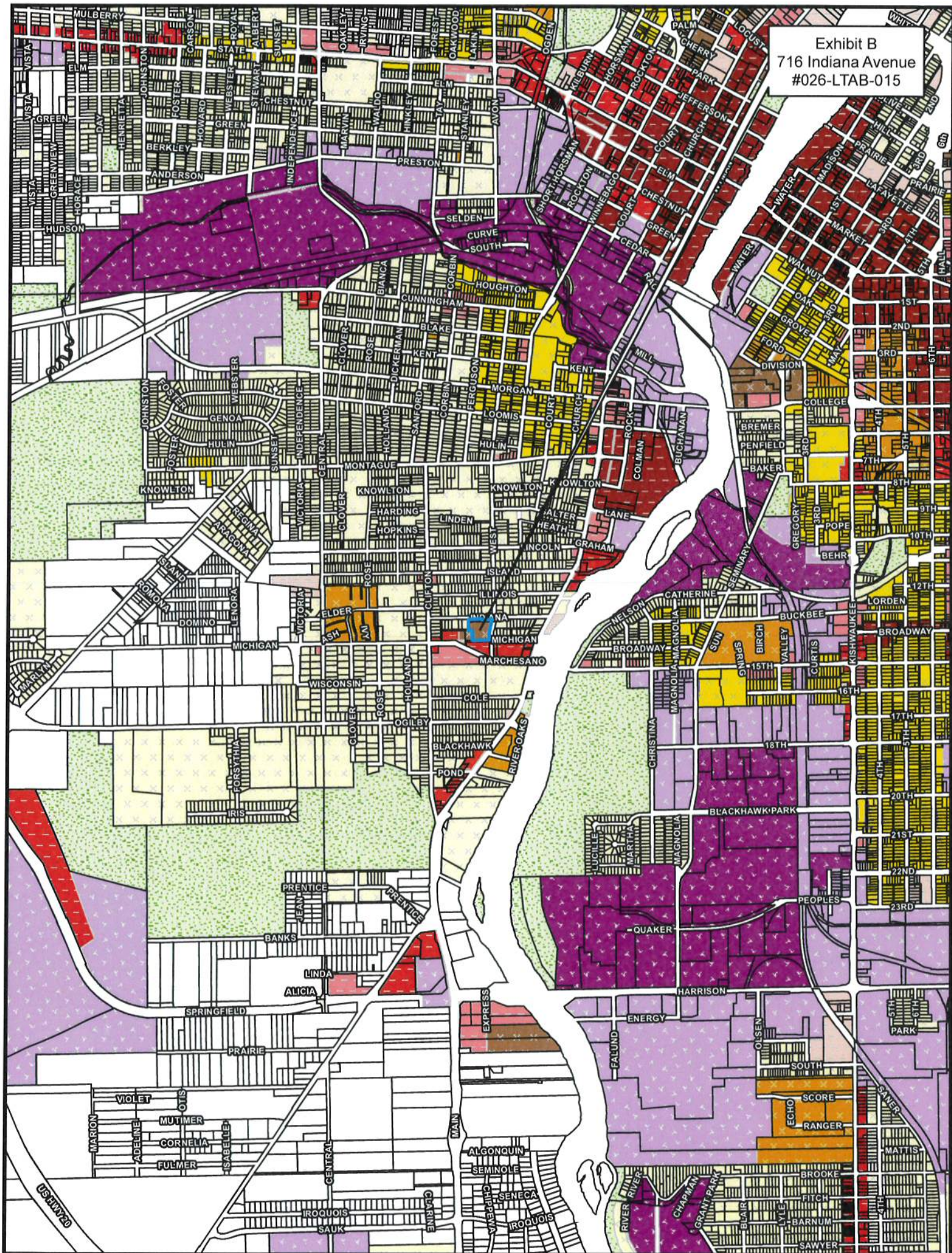
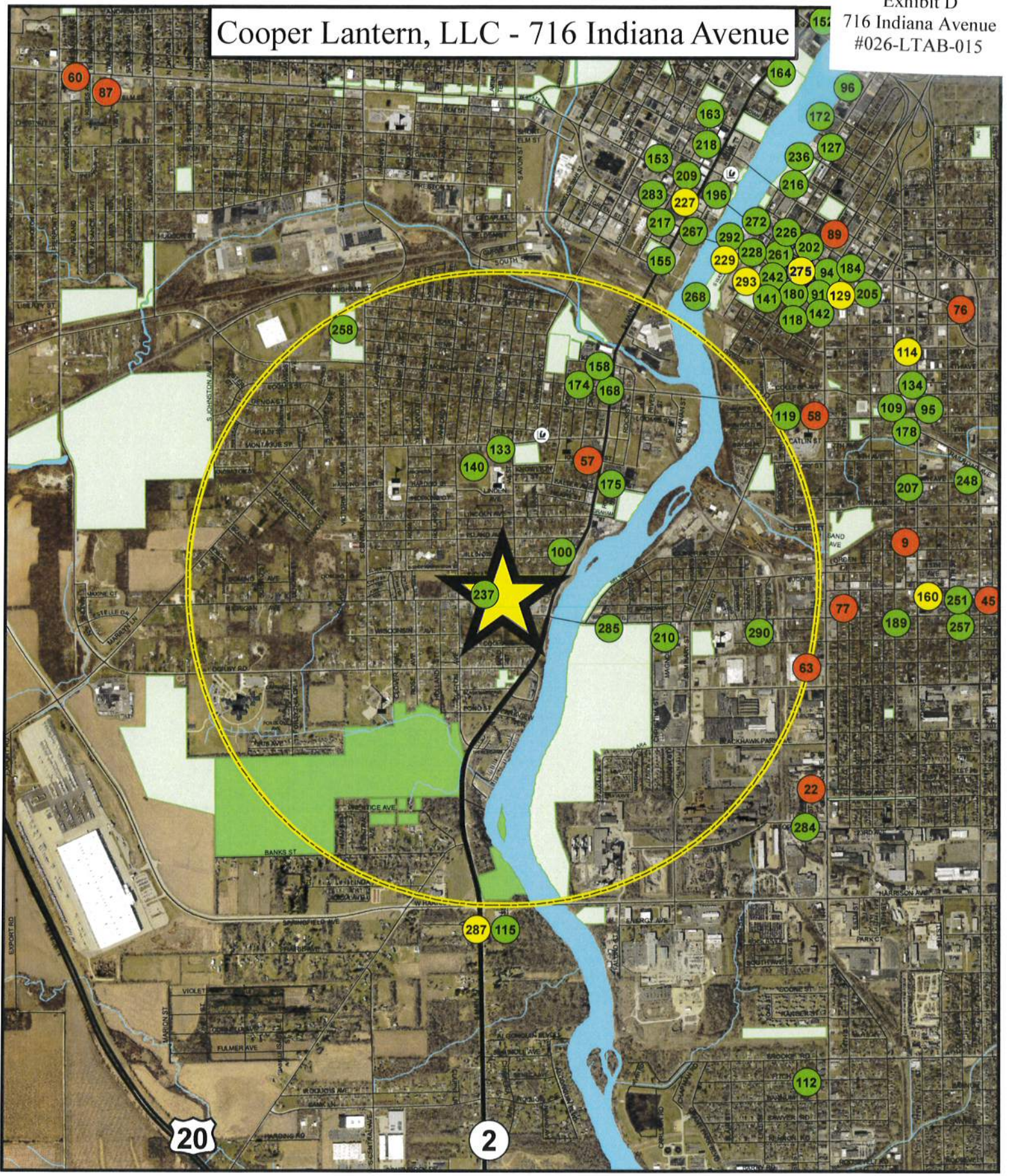




Exhibit C
716 Indiana Avenue
#026-LTAB-015

Cooper Lantern, LLC - 716 Indiana Avenue



- Key**
- College/University
 - School (K-12)
 - City/Village Hall
 - Parks
 - Forest Preserves
 - Sale by the Drink (Beer and Wine)
 - Sale by the Drink (Full Liquor)
 - Package Liquor Sales

CITY OF ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS

LIQUOR LICENSE LOCATIONS-2026

2026



SCALE
1:24,000
1 inch = 0.38 miles
Rockford, Illinois
City of Rockford, Illinois
City of Rockford, Illinois

Shade Trees
84' trees @ 1/10 = 8.4' trees
less 2 existing (2' each) trees = 7 trees
994' foliage; 1' per foot = 8' trees
15 new shade trees (6' x 6') = 2 existing
of caliper 6" diameter trunk - 15' high

Street Frontage 194' x 10' = 1940 L.S.

Remove concrete terrace parking area
replace with 10' x 10' concrete

L.I.E.	Area	Total Area	Notes
2025	1	2025	6' x 6' concrete terrace
150	1	150	6' x 6' concrete terrace
30	7	210	6' x 6' concrete terrace
15	14	105	6' x 6' concrete terrace

710 L.S. > 710 required
210 concrete 7' x 10' = 1470 L.S.

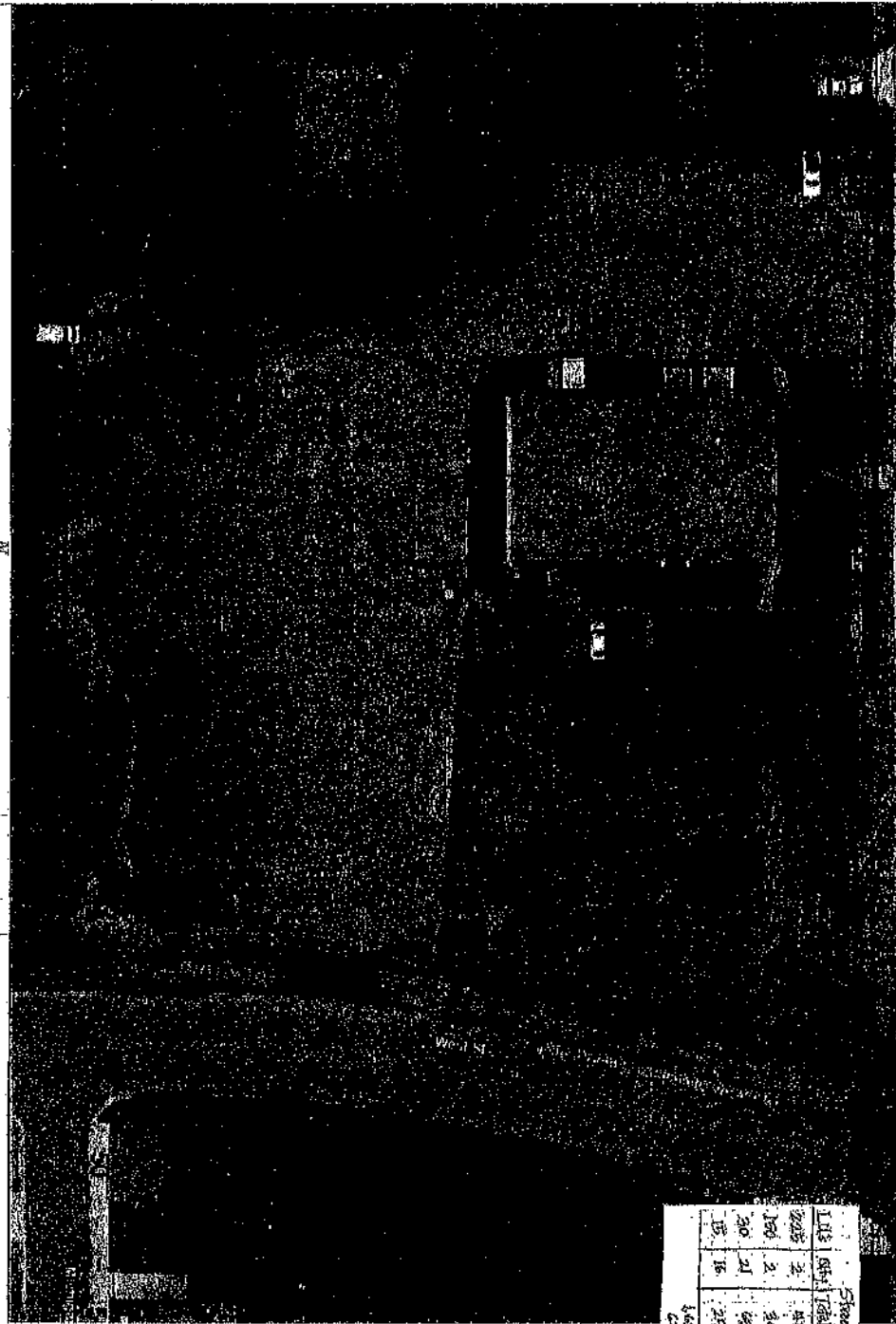
Street Frontage 160' x 10' = 1600 L.S.

L.I.E.	Area	Total Area	Notes
2025	2	2025	6' x 6' concrete terrace
150	2	150	6' x 6' concrete terrace
30	21	630	6' x 6' concrete terrace
15	16	240	6' x 6' concrete terrace

1600 L.S. > 1600 required
630 concrete 7' x 10' = 6300 L.S.

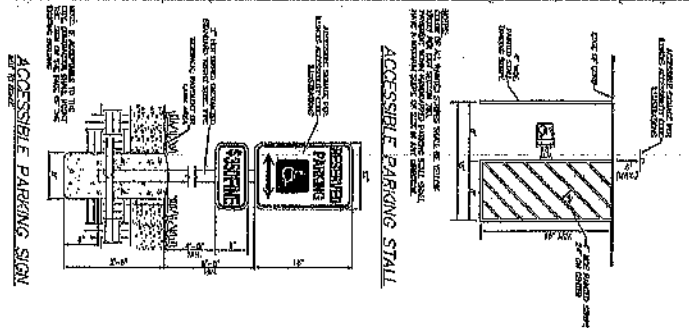
L.I.E.	Area	Total Area	Notes
2025	2	2025	6' x 6' concrete terrace
150	2	150	6' x 6' concrete terrace
30	21	630	6' x 6' concrete terrace
15	16	240	6' x 6' concrete terrace

Street Frontage West 75' 10' x 10' = 1600 L.S.
1600 L.S. > 1600 required
630 concrete 7' x 10' = 6300 L.S.



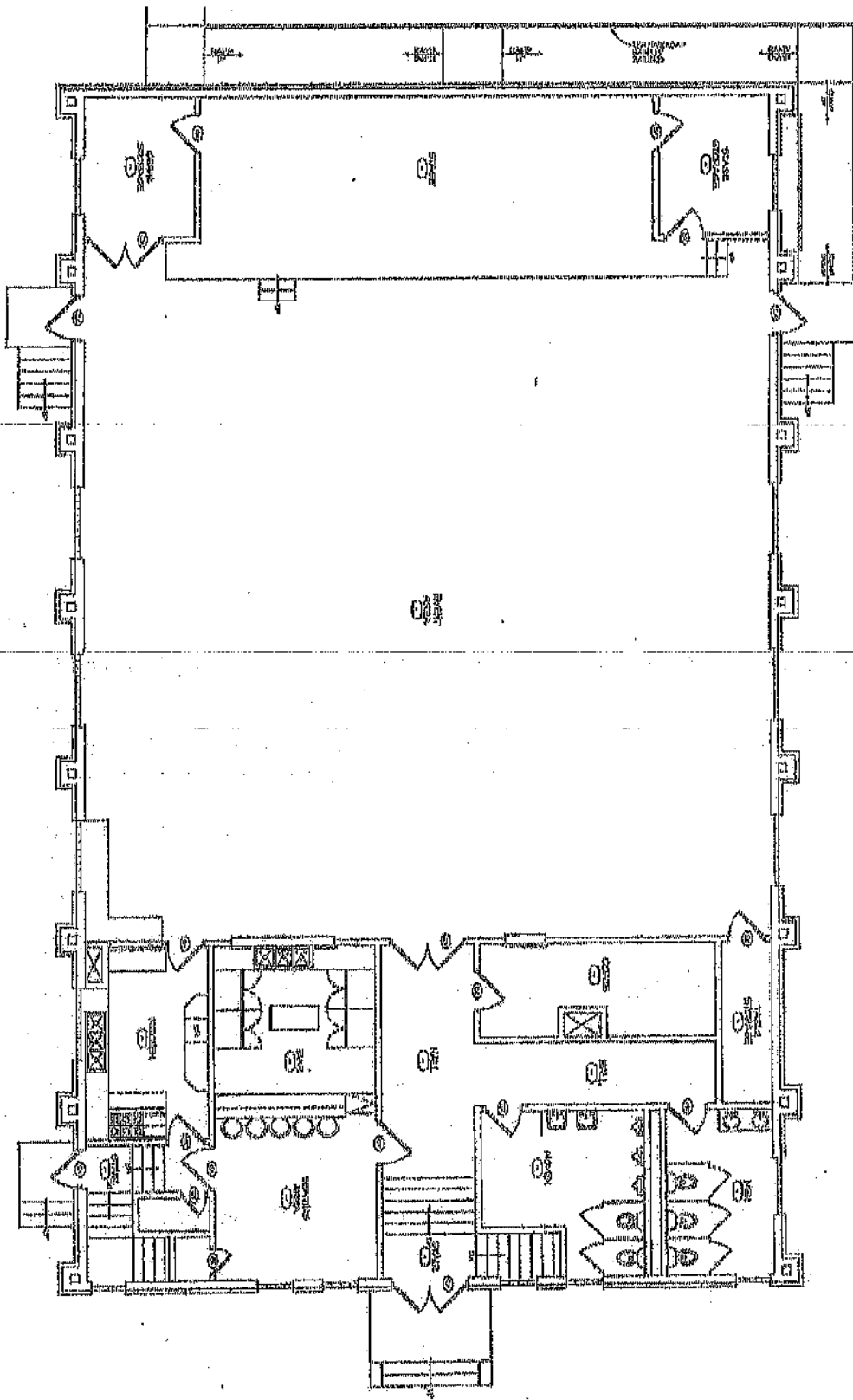
ARCHITECTURAL SITE PLAN
SCALE 1" = 20'

NO SCALE FOR 1000 SQ. FT. OR MORE
SCALE FOR 1" = 20' FOR 1000 SQ. FT. OR MORE
SCALE FOR 1" = 20' FOR 1000 SQ. FT. OR MORE



Renovations for: EVENT HALL 716 INDIANA AVE. ROCKFORD, IL 61102	GENERAL CONTRACTOR: 	ARCHITECT: JEFFREY A. MYERS, P.C. 10398 GLEN-ABBEY-CLOSE ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61107 (815) 540-5823 ja.myers@mohal.com	DATE: 12/10/25 REVISION:	PROJECT #: 120-28 C1

FLOOR PLAN
RENOVATIONS



**Renovations for:
EVENT HALL**

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:

ARCHITECT:

JEFFREY A. MYERS, P.C.
10300 GLEN ABBEY CLOSE

DATE: 10/15/99
REVISION:

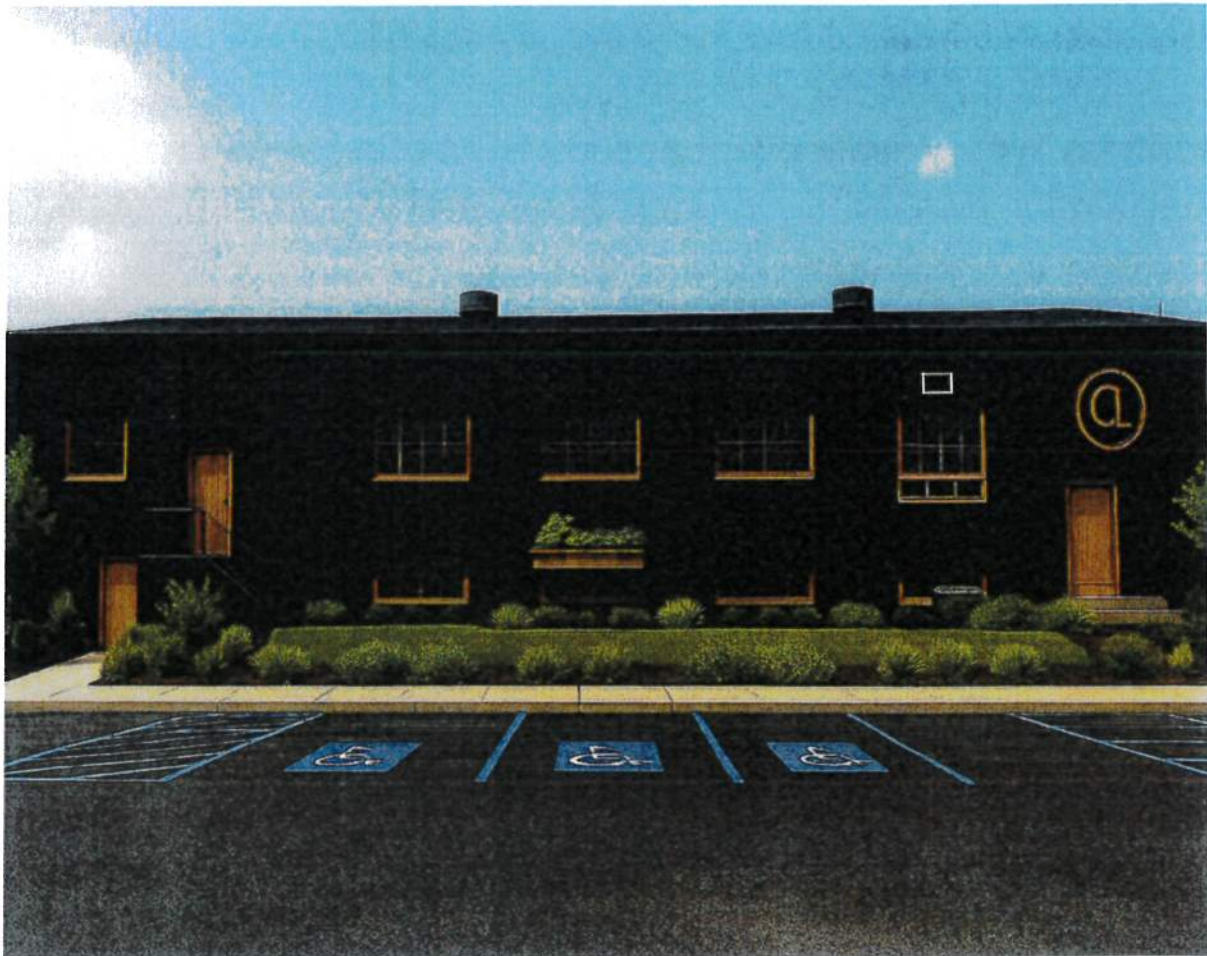
PROJECT #



Exhibit F
716 Indiana Avenue
#026-LTAB-015

The Copper Lantern

716 Indiana Ave Rockford, IL 61102



Overview

Business Name: Copper Lantern Event Venue

Location: 716 Indiana Ave Rockford, Illinois 61102

Business Type: Private event and entertainment venue specializing in weddings, quinceañeras, and social celebrations.

Ownership: Independently owned and operated by Copper Lantern LLC.

Purpose of Plan: To obtain a state and local liquor license authorizing the sale and service of alcoholic beverages during hosted private events.

Mission

Through thoughtful restoration and community collaboration, we create a welcoming and diverse venue where every celebration brings positivity to our City's story.

Hours of operation

Monday	Closed	maintenance/ private use only
Tuesday	Closed	Maintenance/ private use only
Wednesday	2:00pm-9:00pm	Celebration of life/ private events
Thursday	2:00PM-9:00PM	Celebration of life/ private events
Friday	2:00pm-12:am	Receptions/ Quinceañeras/Celebrations
Saturday	2:00pm-12:am	Receptions/ Quinceañeras/Celebrations
Sunday	12:00pm-10:pm	Receptions/ Quinceañeras/Celebrations

Drink menu will include beer, wine, Champagne, liquor and cocktails.

The drinks listed below are carefully considered by a BASSET trained professional.

Family Tradition- Brandy/ Bourbon, bitters, orange slice, Luxardo Maraschino cherries/syrup, sprite

Paloma- Cazadores tequila blanco, squirt, lime twist

Lantern Iced Tea- Smirnoff vanilla, Razberry, Orange, sour mix, splash of cranberry juice

Margarita- Cazadores Tequila, Triple Sec, Cointreau, lime/strawberry juice

Espresso Martini- Titos Vodka, simple syrup, Brewed expresso, coffee liquor, cinnamon, coffee bean garnish

Domestic beer, Wine, Champagne, Liquor

Horchata, Hot Chocolate, Tea

Coke products, Water

Point of Sale Equipment

Square

Using Square point of sale equipment will allow BASSET trained employees to properly exchange funds, maintain inventory, collect appropriate tax.

Square has robust cyber security ensuring patron safety.

Security

Security cameras will be installed in the interior of the building to monitor activity inside and on the exterior of the building to monitor the parking lots. A total of eight (8) cameras will be installed with four (4) interior cameras and four (4) exterior cameras. The interior cameras will be placed at each entrance, exit, and the bar area. The exterior cameras will be placed on each side of the building, so all exterior areas are monitored.

In addition to security cameras, security staff will be employed during all weekend events.

Proposed entertainment and Activities

The Copper Lantern's entertainment program focuses on high-quality local engagement and private event hosting:

- Local DJs and Catering
- Dancing and social mixers
- Corporate gatherings
- Private event hosting such as wedding receptions, quinceañeras, birthdays, and anniversaries
- No outdoor or amplified music past 10 PM to remain compliant with Rockford.

Target Audience

Primary Market

Guests ages range from 15–75 years old within the Rockford metropolitan area seeking elegant and modern spaces for weddings, Quinceañeras, and milestone celebrations. By functioning as a Family first venue hosting Quinceañeras and birthdays, we must acknowledge and comply with local laws to ensure safety for under legal age patrons.

Secondary Market:

Local residents and young professionals attending cultural or work based events.

Demographic Highlights:

- Multicultural communities celebrating quinceañeras and large family events.
- Young couples and professionals seeking urban-chic venues for receptions.
- Community members seeking safe, modern gathering options.

Anticipated Food Vs. Alcohol Sales

The Copper Lantern does not operate a kitchen or prepare food on-site. Instead, guests will contract with licensed catering companies that handle all food preparation and service. The venue will focus on alcohol sales and beverage service as its primary revenue stream.

Estimated Sales Ratio:

- Alcoholic Beverages: 85% of total revenue
- Non-Alcoholic Beverages: 10% of total revenue
- Food/Catering coordination fees: 2% of total revenue

Alcohol and Service Compliance Plan

- All alcohol will be served by BASSET-certified bartenders in compliance with Illinois Liquor Control Commission (ILCC) and City of Rockford regulations.
- Alcohol service will cease 30 minutes prior to closing each night.
- No alcohol sales to minors or visibly intoxicated individuals.
- Strict ID verification and wristband policy in place.
- Security staff will be present during all weekend entertainment events.
- The venue will maintain full liability insurance coverage as required by the ILCC and City of Rockford.

Community Impact

Copper Lantern is committed to:

- Enhancing Rockford's entertainment and cultural landscape.
 - Promoting responsible alcohol service.
 - Providing local employment opportunities (bartenders, DJs, security, event staff).
 - Supporting community revitalization through consistent, compliant operations and elegant facility design.
-

Conclusion

Copper Lantern Event Venue requests approval for a full liquor license to serve beer, wine, and spirits during private and public events consistent with state and city regulations. The business will uphold Illinois Liquor Control Commission standards, contribute to Rockford's economic and cultural development, and operate responsibly with a focus on community engagement, safety, and revitalization.

Event Date	Call Number	Situation Reported	Call Disposition	Location	Commonplace Name
11/19/2025 05:58:11 PM	25-252923	911 CELLULAR HANG UP	911 CLOSE W/O SEND TO PENDING	716 Indiana Ave	
11/15/2025 07:27:33 AM	25-249492	SUSPICIOUS VEHICLE	CALLER CANCELLED	716 Indiana Ave	Lithuanian Club
06/02/2024 08:17:22 PM	24-119405	SUSPICIOUS VEHICLE	ADV - ADVISED	716 Indiana Ave	Lithuanian Club