

STAFF REPORT

DATE: December 18, 2025
TO: Zoning Board of Appeals
FROM: Ray Heitner, Planner
RE: Petition Number: 2025-55 and 2025-56
Applicant: Jose Luis Rojas Sr.
Status of Applicant: Developer
Location: 621-629 N. Hickory Street (Council District #4)
Request: A Variation of Use to allow a laundromat, a B-1 (neighborhood business) use in an R-4 (multi-family residential) zoning district, located at 629 N. Hickory Street.
A Variation to reduce the required amount of off-street parking from 31 spaces to 19 spaces, located at 621-629 N. Hickory Street.

Purpose

The applicant is requesting the following Variations to allow conversion of an existing vacant commercial tenant space into a laundromat at 629 N. Hickory Street:

- Variation of Use to allow a laundromat, a B-1 (neighborhood business) use in an R-4 (multi-family residential) zoning district.
- Variation to reduce the required amount of off-street parking from 31 spaces to 19 spaces.

The City Council will make the final decision on the requested Variation of Use petition. The Zoning Board of Appeals makes the final decision on the Variation request pertaining to the amount of required off-street parking.

Site Specific Information

The subject property contains a mixed-use, two-story, brick building that was constructed in 1916 and maintains its original layout with seven upper-level apartment dwelling units and three commercial units on the main floor. The subject property contained B-2 (local business) zoning between 1939 and 1969 but has been zoned R-4 (low density multi-family residential) zoning since 1969. Due to the property's zoning classification, commercial uses are prohibited. The R-4 Zoning classification appears to have never

matched the historic and current land uses. Past commercial uses included taverns, grocery stores, and offices, that were historically accessed by walking.

The applicant is requesting to put in a laundromat at 629 N. Hickory Street, which is the northernmost ground-floor commercial unit in the subject building. In 2019, the City Council approved an amended Variation of Use to allow the existing grocery store at 625 N. Hickory Street, which is the middle ground-floor commercial unit. A salon is located at 621 N. Hickory Street, which is the southernmost commercial unit.

The proposed laundromat would contain 20 washing machines and 20 dryers and would operate between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. The laundromat would have two entrances, one from the building's northeast corner, and one along the north side of the building. There would be no internal access between the laundromat and the residences on the second floor. A conceptual floor plan of the proposed laundromat business has been included in the staff report packet.

The site contains 19 off-street parking spaces, as shown in the attached parking lot exhibit. Twelve parking spaces are located west of the subject building, with two additional spaces in a detached garage that is adjacent to the main parking lot. Five angled parking spaces are located just south of Lime Street, along the building's north side. The entirety of the site is covered by the building, existing off-street parking, or access drives that are needed for site circulation. There is no room for additional off-street parking.

Surrounding Zoning, Land Use and Character

The zoning and land use for the adjacent properties are as follows:

- North: R-4 (low multi-family residential), multi-family residential
- South: R-4 (low multi-family residential), multi-family residential
- East: R-2 (single-family residential), single-family residential
- West: R-2 (single-family residential), single-family residential

Applicable Regulations

- Section 47-8.1 – Permitted Principal Uses (R-4)
- Section 47-8.8 – Prohibited Uses (R-4)
- Section 47-17.17(N)(8) and (N)(28) – Off-Street Parking Regulations – Retail and Laundromats
- Section 47-17.28 – Variation of Use
- Section 47-19.8 - Findings of Facts Supporting a Variation (refer to attachment)

A "**Variation of Use**" shall be defined to mean relief from strict compliance with the use limitations of this Ordinance regarding the classification, regulation, and restriction of the

location where trades, industries, businesses, and residences may exist.

Analysis

The applicant's proposal for a laundromat is not an allowable use within the subject property's R-4 (low density multi-family residential) zoning district. Therefore, a Variation of Use to allow the proposed use is required. Section 47-19.8 of the City's Zoning Ordinance details the conditions that must be met for a Variation to be granted. The building predates both the City's Zoning Ordinance and the applicable R-4 zoning designation and has operated as a mixed-use commercial and residential building since its inception. Since the subject property has R-4 (low density multi-family residential) zoning, commercial uses cannot operate within the ground floor area without a Variation of Use. Therefore, the property in question cannot yield a reasonable return if permitted to be used only under the conditions allowed by the zoning's district's regulations. Staff views the misaligned zoning designation as a unique circumstance causing the owner plight in filling the vacant commercial space. Due to the building's history as a mixed-use building within the context of the Bicentennial Bluffs neighborhood, staff does not believe that an additional neighborhood business-oriented use will alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

The proposed laundromat use comes with an off-street parking requirement of one parking space for every two washing machines. Since the applicant has stated that the laundromat would contain a maximum of 20 washing machines, 10 parking spaces are required. An additional 10 parking spaces are required for the existing salon and grocery store uses in the building. The residential units on the top floor each require 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit. Therefore, the off-street parking total that is required for the entire building is 31 parking spaces. The attached parking lot exhibit shows how the site can accommodate no more than 19 off-street parking spaces.

While there is little on-site parking to accommodate the proposed business, ample street parking in the surrounding neighborhood is available at most times throughout the day. Staff observed this location at several times throughout the day and found parking available on Hickory Street and Lime Street, adjacent to the proposed business. Furthermore, due to the building's centrality within the Bicentennial Bluffs neighborhood, the subject building is easily accessible by walking or biking to many of its patrons.

Regarding the proposed Variation to reduce the required amount of off-street parking from 31 spaces to 19 spaces, staff finds that the property in question cannot yield a reasonable return if permitted to follow the Zoning Ordinance's applicable parking regulations, due to site constraints. The size of the building relative to the overall lot size presents a plight of the owner due to unique circumstances. Since the building has functioned as an established mixed-use building within the context of the Bicentennial Bluffs neighborhood

for over 100 years, staff does not believe the Variation, if granted, will alter the essential character of the locality.

Recommended Action

Staff recommends the Zoning Board of Appeals recommend the City Council approve both the requested Variation of Use to allow a laundromat, a B-1 (neighborhood business) use in an R-4 (multi-family residential) zoning district and a Variation to reduce the required amount of off-street parking from 31 spaces to 19 spaces. The requested Variation of Use should be recommended subject to the conditions listed below.

Conditions

1. That the structure is not expanded to accommodate additional dwelling units or commercial units.
2. That the existing off-street parking arrangement, which includes 19 total off-street parking spaces, remain in place while the three commercial units are occupied.
3. That the City may initiate a repeal process for the Variation of Use if the required conditions are not satisfied.
4. Should the property be declared a public nuisance by the City Council, the Variation of Use shall be subject to a rehearing and possible revocation.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Verified by Planner (please initial): _____

Payment received from: _____

Petition #: _____

Common Address: _____

Date filed: _____

Meeting date assigned: _____

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

JOLIET, ILLINOIS

PETITION FOR VARIATION OF USE

City of Joliet Planning Division, 150 W. Jefferson St., Joliet, IL 60432
Ph (815)724-4050 Fax (815)724-4056

ADDRESS FOR WHICH VARIATION IS REQUESTED: 629 Hickory Street, Joliet, Illinois 60435

PETITIONER'S NAME: Jose Luis Rojas Sr

HOME ADDRESS: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

BUSINESS ADDRESS: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

PHONE: (Primary) _____ (Secondary) _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ FAX: _____

PROPERTY INTEREST OF PETITIONER: 629 Hickory Street Joliet, Illinois 60435

OWNER OF PROPERTY: Uriel C. Rojas Sr

HOME ADDRESS: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

BUSINESS ADDRESS: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ FAX: _____

Any use requiring a business license shall concurrently apply for a business license and submit a copy with this petition. Additionally, if this request is for operation of a business, please provide the following information:

BUSINESS REFERENCES (name, address, phone or email):

None

OTHER PROJECTS AND/OR DEVELOPMENTS:

None at this moment

PERMANENT INDEX NUMBER (TAX NO. OR P. I. N.): 30-07-09-217-008-000;
_____; _____; _____.

Property Index Number/P.I.N. can be found on tax bill or Will County Supervisor of Assessments website

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY (an attached copy preferred):

Commercial / Apartment unit, location 621-629 N Hickory Street Joliet, Illinois 60435

LOT SIZE: WIDTH: _____ DEPTH: _____ AREA: 2400 square feet

PRESENT USE(S) OF PROPERTY: Vacant

PRESENT ZONING OF PROPERTY: Commercial

VARIATION OF USE REQUESTED: Requesting to open a laundrymat for the apartments and neighborhood

RESPONSE TO VARIATION OF USE CRITERIA

The Zoning Board of Appeals is authorized to grant or recommend relief only when it has received adequate evidence to establish a practical difficulty or hardship. The evidence must support each of the following three conditions:

- (a) The property in question cannot yield a reasonable return by use permitted and subject to the conditions allowed by the regulations in the particular district or zone.
- (b) The plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances.
- (c) The variation, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.

Please describe how this request meets the criteria by responding to the following questions in your own words.

1. How do the applicable zoning regulations prevent the property in question from yielding a reasonable return?

I do not believe that the applicable zoning regulations prevent the property in question from yielding a reasonable return.

I believe that the existing establishment already meets the criteria for having the business that I wish to open and it would greatly benefit the community,

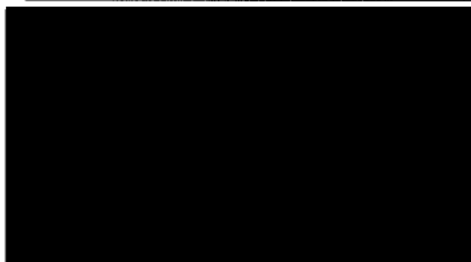
IV. BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

If the owner of the business is different than the owner of the real property associated with the application, then the following information must be provided:

Select the type of business owner associated with this application and fill in the contact information below:

- ☒ **Individual:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of the individual owner(s)
- ☐ **Corporation:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all persons holding 3% or more of the stock of the corporation and the percentage of shares held by such stockholders
- ☐ **Limited Liability Company:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all members of the company along with the percentage of ownership held by each member
- ☐ **Partnership:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all partners
- ☐ **Other type of organization:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all persons having a legal or equitable ownership interest in the organization

Jose Luis Rojas Sr

	_____

	_____ FAX: _____

NOTE:

If a stockholder, member, beneficiary or partner disclosed in Section III or Section IV is not an individual, then the individuals holding the legal or equitable title to the real property or business associated with the application must also be disclosed. For example, if the real property associated with an application is owned by a land trust, and the beneficiary of the land trust is a limited liability company, then the members of the limited liability company must be disclosed. If one of the members of the limited liability company is a partnership, then the identity of the partners must be disclosed. If one of the partners is a corporation, then all persons owning 3% or more of the issued stock must be disclosed.

SIGNED:

DATE:

Name, Title, and Telephone Numbers of Person Completing and Submitting This Form:

PRINT

How to Post a Sign for any Land Use Change

In an effort to increase the awareness of neighborhoods of potential land use changes in their areas, the City of Joliet requires posting of a sign giving notice of a hearing on a proposed land use change. All petitions filed for review by the Zoning Board of Appeals and Plan Commission must follow these procedures:

1. At least one sign for every 500 feet of street frontage, with a minimum of one sign on each street abutting the property shall be posted. If the property in question is more than 1 acre please refer to page 2 for information.
2. The sign shall be posted at least 15 days but not more than 30 days before the hearing date.
3. The sign shall contain the time and place of the public hearing and the nature of the land use change being requested. It shall be placed in a conspicuous location on the property so it may be observed and read from the street.
4. The sign shall be provided by the City of Joliet Planning Division upon the applicant's payment of a \$50.00 deposit for each sign.
5. It shall be the applicant's responsibility to post the sign. Written certification of the posting of the sign shall be provided by the applicant to the City with the date and location of the posting of the sign.
6. Upon completion of the public hearing, the sign shall be removed and returned to the City within ten days. The applicant's deposit shall be refunded upon return of the sign.
7. Failure to post the sign as required may result in the deferral of action on, or the denial of, the applicant's petition.

CITY OF JOLIET OWNERSHIP DISCLOSURE FORM

The City of Joliet requires that applicants for zoning relief, subdivision approval, building permits and business licenses disclose the identity of all persons having an ownership interest in the business and the real property associated with the application. A copy of this form must be completed and submitted with other application materials. Failure to properly complete and submit this form may result in the denial of the application.

I. INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICATION

This form is submitted as part of an application for the following (check all that apply):

- ☐ Rezoning, Special Use Permit, Variation, or Other Zoning Relief (Complete Sections II and III)
- ☒ Preliminary Plat, Final Plat, or Record Plat of Subdivision (Complete Sections II and III)
- ☐ Building Permit (Complete Sections II and III)
- ☐ Business License (Complete All Sections)

II. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPERTY

The address and PIN(s) of the real property associated with this application are:

629 N. Hickory Street Joliet, Illinois 60435

PIN(s): 30-07-09-217-008-000

III. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Select the type of owner of the real property associated with this application and fill in the appropriate contact information below:

- ☒ **Individual:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of the individual owner(s)
- ☐ **Corporation:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all persons holding 3% or more of the stock of the corporation and the percentage of shares held by such stockholders
- ☐ **Limited Liability Company:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all members of the company along with the percentage of ownership held by each member
- ☐ **Land Trust:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of the trustee(s) and all beneficiaries
- ☐ **Partnership:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all partners
- ☐ **Other type of organization:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all persons having a legal or equitable ownership interest in the organization or the right to direct the affairs of the organization

Uriel C. Rojas

E-MAIL

FAX:

2. *What unique circumstances exist which mandate a variance?*

I don't believe that there is any unique circumstances that exist which mandates a variance. Other than having the commercial unit upgraded and updated. If allow to proceed with my plan of opening this business, I will remodel and update the unit according to code.

3. *What impact would the granting of this variance have upon the essential character of the general area? Please include both positive and negative impacts.*

The impact that this variance would have upon the essential character of this general area would be that would provide them convenience of having a place to wash laundry for the apartment building nearby and the neighborhood that don't have washer and dryer in the convenience of their own home.

The only down side that it might arise from having a business in this area would be that it would have more vehicle traffic and people coming and going from the establishment.

REQUIRED SUPPORTING ATTACHMENTS

- ☐ Site plan / concept plan / floor plan / building elevation plan
- ☐ Joliet Ownership Disclosure form
- ☐ Business license application (if applicable)

NOTARIZATION OF PETITION

STATE OF ILLINOIS) ss
COUNTY OF WILL)

I, [REDACTED] depose and say that the above statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I agree to be present in person or by representation when this petition is heard before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

[REDACTED]

Petitioner's Signature

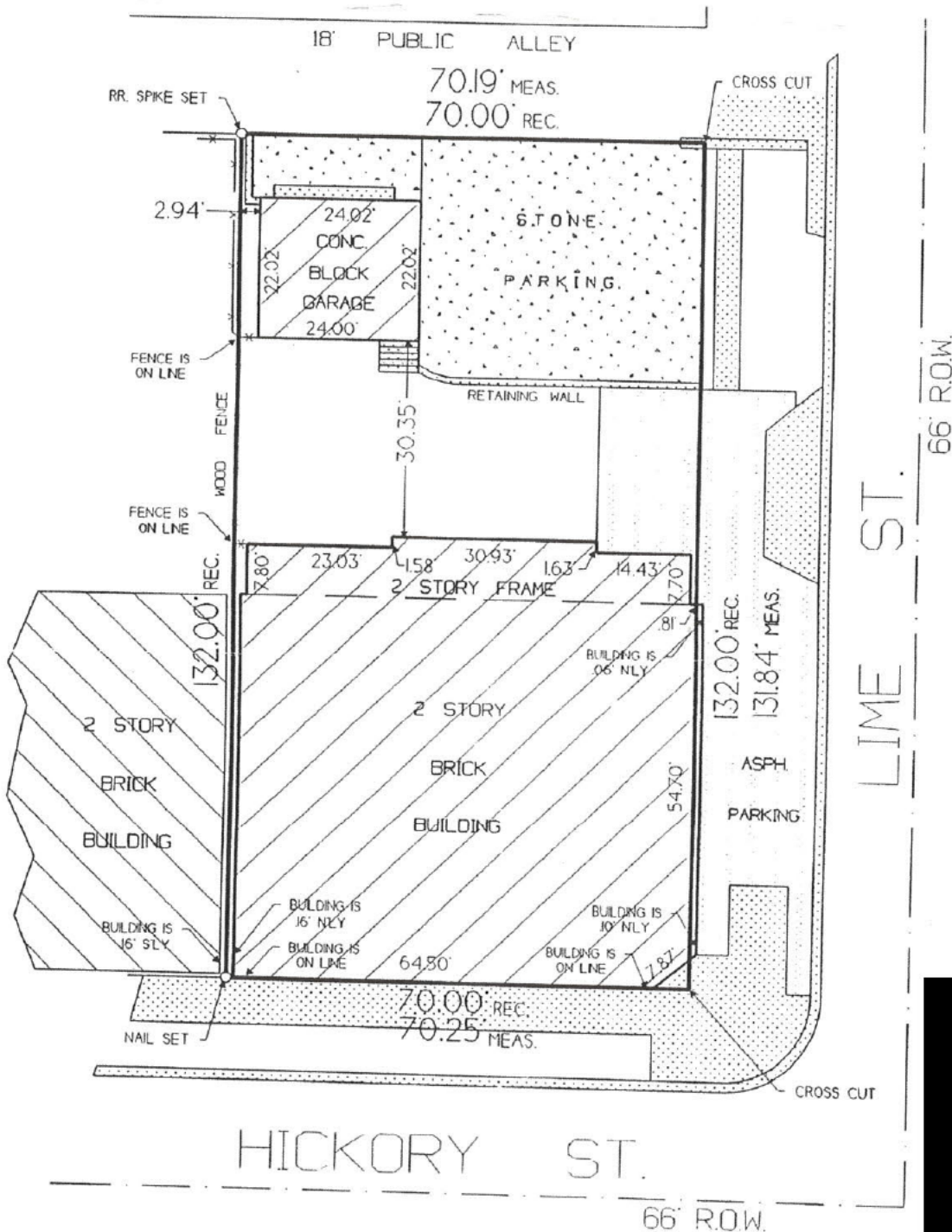
Owner's Signature
(If other than petitioner)

[REDACTED]

PLAT OF SURVEY

LOT 1 IN BLOCK 21, IN THAT PART OF THE CITY OF JOLIET, LAID OUT AND PLATTED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN CANAL AS NORTH JOLIET AND LOCATED ON THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 9, IN TOWNSHIP 35 NORTH, AND IN RANGE 10 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

621 - 629 HICKORY STREET
JOLIET, IL



18' PUBLIC ALLEY

70.19' MEAS.
70.00' REC.

CROSS CUT

RR. SPOKE SET

2.94'

24.02'
CONC.
BLOCK
GARAGE
24.00'

6.TONE
PARKING.

FENCE IS
ON LINE

WOOD FENCE

FENCE IS
ON LINE

RETAINING WALL

30.35'

23.03' 15.8' 30.93' 16.3' 14.43' 7.80'
2 STORY FRAME

BUILDING IS
ON NLY

2 STORY
BRICK
BUILDING

2 STORY
BRICK
BUILDING

ASPH.
PARKING

BUILDING IS
ON NLY

BUILDING IS
ON NLY
BUILDING IS
ON LINE

BUILDING IS
ON NLY
BUILDING IS
ON LINE

70.00' REC.
70.25' MEAS.

NAIL SET

CROSS CUT

HICKORY ST.

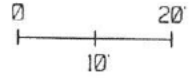
66' R.O.W.

LIME ST.

66' R.O.W.



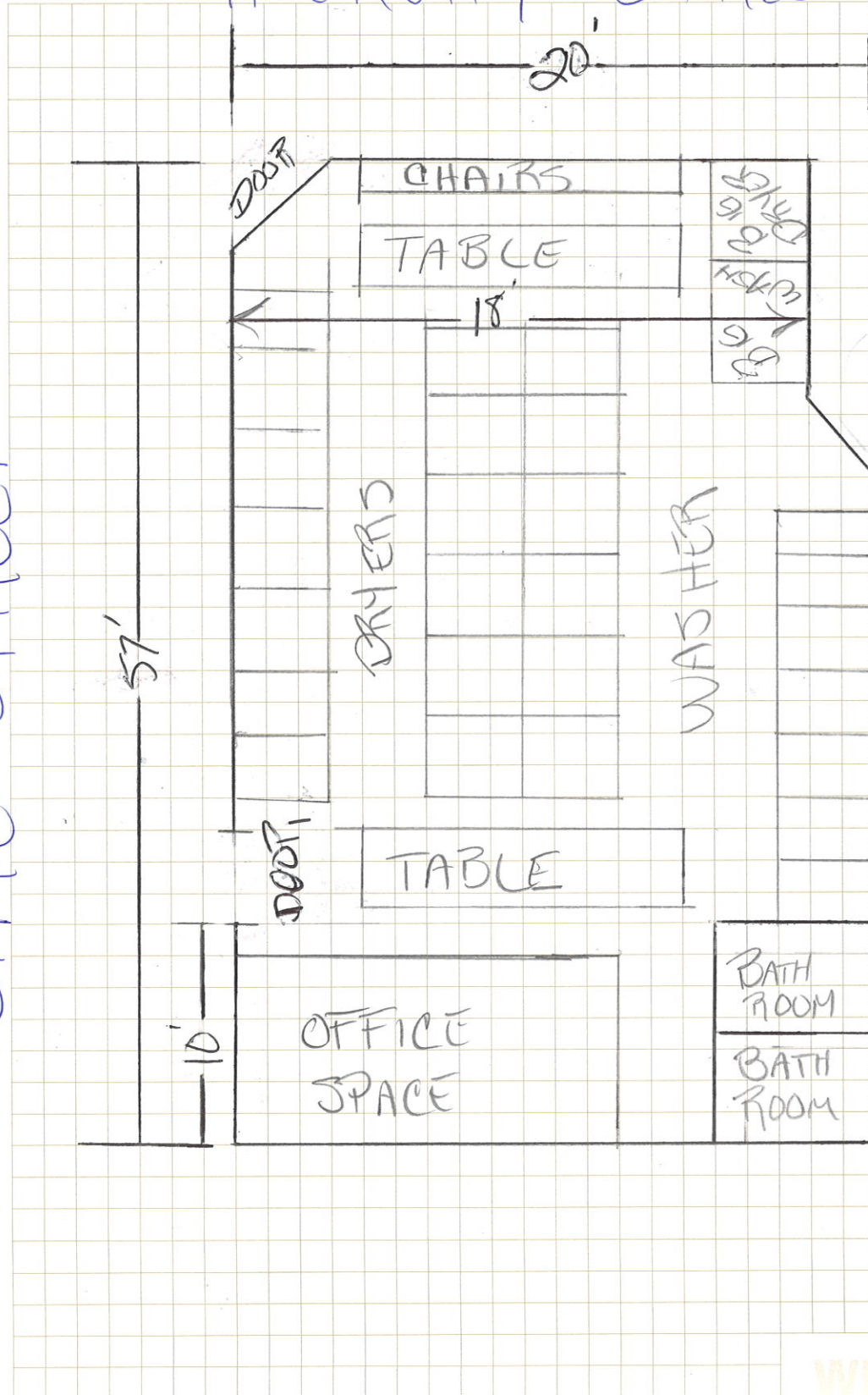
SCALE:



HICKORY STREET

TOTAL
SQUARE
FOOT
\$1,140

LIME STREET



621 - 629 N. Hickory St

LIME ST

N HICKORY ST





TIENDITA Y CARNITAS
CRUZITO

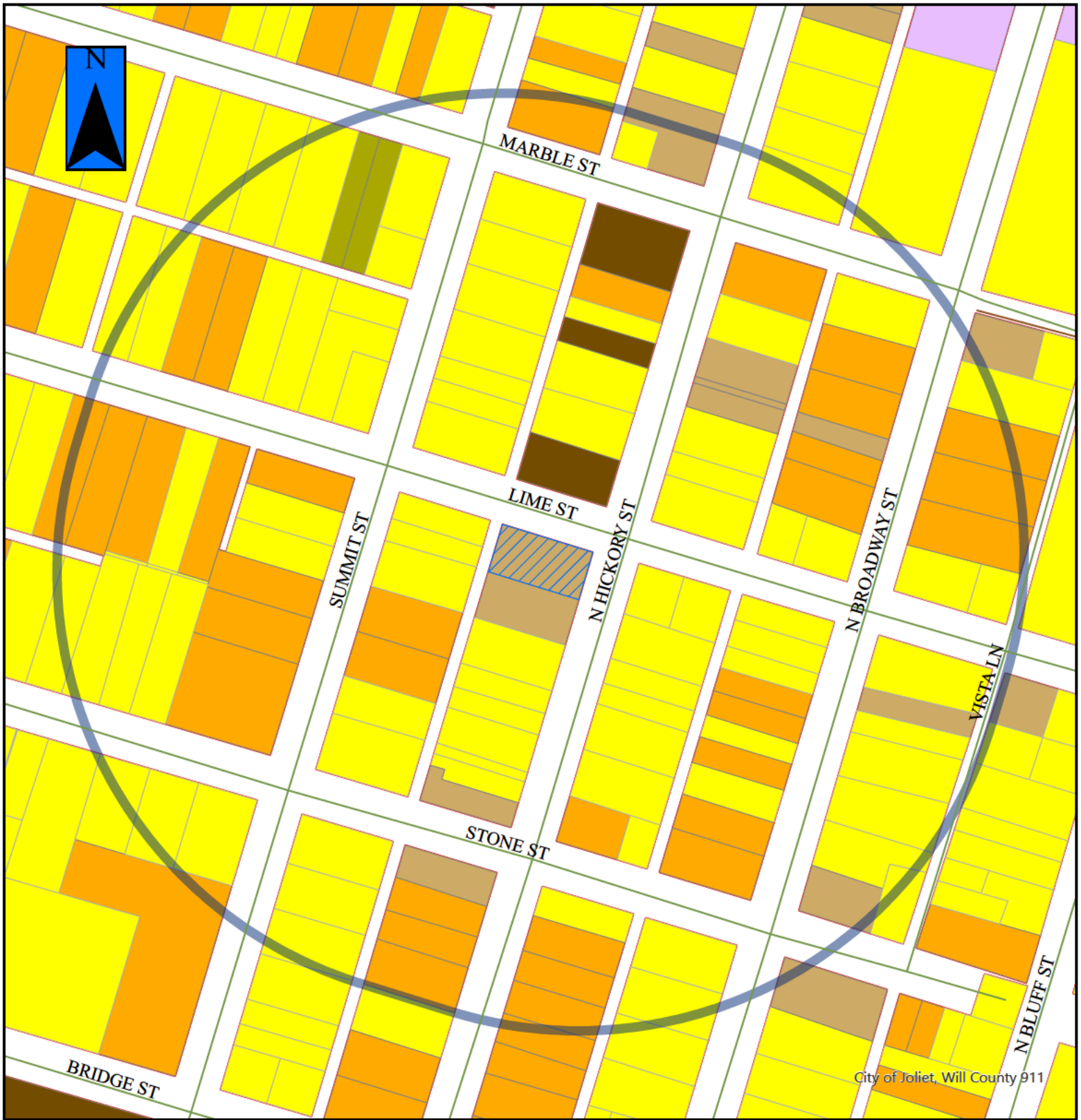












City of Joliet, Will County 911

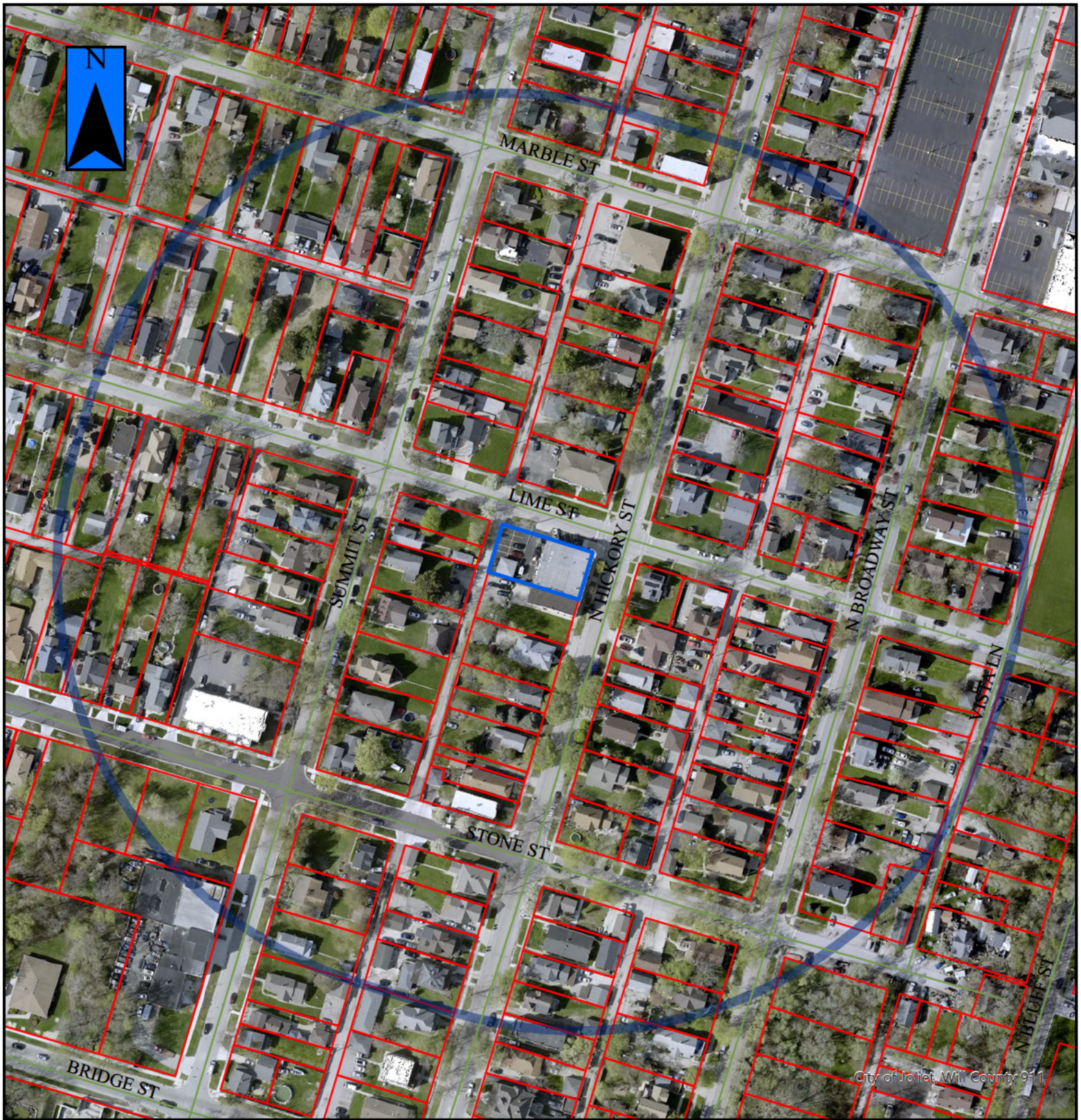
2025-55 & 2025-56



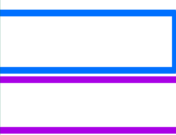
= Property in Question
= 600' Public Notification Boundary

Legend

B-1	I-TA	R-2
B-2	I-TB	R-2A
B-3	I-TC	R-3
I-1	R-1	R-4
I-2	R-1A	R-5
I-T	R-1B	R-B



2025-55a & 2025-56a



= Property in Question / Propiedad en cuestión
 = 600' Public Notification Boundary /
 Límite de notificación pública de 600 ft (180 m)