



PLANNING & ZONING REPORT

Liquor and Tobacco Advisory Board Meeting of October 20, 2020

File #020-LTAB-088

APPLICANTS: Moses Allen and Ahmad Ali Safi of LIT Hookah Bar, LLC

LOCATION: 2510 South Alpine Road

REQUESTED ACTION: The sale of tobacco products in conjunction with a hookah lounge in a C-3, General Commercial Zoning District.

EXISTING USE: Vacant bank

PROPOSED USE: Hookah lounge with the sale of tobacco products

DIMENSIONS: 82 feet by 125.5 feet **SQUARE FOOTAGE:** 10,291 sq. ft.

ADJACENT ZONING AND LAND USES:

NORTH:	C-3	General Commercial Zoning District
EAST:	C-3	General Commercial Zoning District
SOUTH:	C-3	General Commercial Zoning District
WEST:	C-3	General Commercial Zoning District

YEAR 2020 PLAN: C Commercial Retail

HISTORY: File #018-LTAB-036: The sale of tobacco products in conjunction with a retail store in a C-3, General Commercial Zoning District was approved on October 3, 2018 for the property located at 2432 South Alpine Road. This is directly north of the subject property within the Alpine Village Shopping Center.

File #018-LTAB-028: The sale of beer and wine by the drink in conjunction with a restaurant and video gaming facility in a C-3, General Commercial Zoning District was approved on July 25, 2018 for the property located at 2424 South Alpine Road. This property is directly north of the subject property within the Alpine Village Shopping Center.

File #018-LTAB-025: The sale of tobacco products in conjunction with manufacturing, offices and retail in a C-3, General Commercial Zoning District was approved on July 5, 2018 for the property located at 3224 South Alpine Road. This is six (6) blocks south of the subject property.

File #015-LTAB-016: The sale of packaged liquor in conjunction with a retail drug store with sundries in a C-3, General Commercial Zoning District was approved April 6, 2015 for the property located at 2525 South Alpine Road. This is one block south of the subject property.

File #015-LTAB-003: The sale of packaged liquor and tobacco products in conjunction with a gas station and convenience store in a C-3, General

Commercial Zoning District was approved on March 16, 2015 for the property located at 4106 Harrison Avenue. This is three (3) blocks southwest of the subject property.

REVIEW COMMENTS: The Applicant is requesting the sale of tobacco products in conjunction with a hookah lounge in a C-3, General Commercial Zoning District. Exhibit A shows the subject property is located 572 feet north of the South Alpine Road and Harrison Avenue intersection. The parcel is surrounded by commercial and residential uses (Exhibits B & C).

The Applicants, Moses Allen and Ahmad Ali Safi of LIT Hookah Bar, LLC, are the managing members. Within the Tobacco Application, it is indicated that hookah lounge will be managed by a manager.

The Applicant did not submit a site plan, but Exhibit C shows that the subject property consists of a former bank with a drive-thru, landscaping, and four (4) parking spaces.

Exhibit D shows the revised floor plan of the hookah lounge. The hookah lounge will consist of three (3) areas. Exhibit D shows that the existing building will consist of seating with a table and seating for six (6), banquet with table and seating for six (6), office space and storage, sales area, prep area, bathrooms, mechanical rooms, and the vestibule. Additionally, Exhibit D, shows a 37.96 feet by 32.88 feet addition to the west side of the existing building that will consist of seating with five (5) tables, three (3) banquets and seating for 34. The remaining 37.96 feet by 32.80 feet portion of the drive-thru will be converted into an outdoor seating area (Exhibit E). The proposed hookah lounge requires 57 parking spaces (using the 13.3 spaces per 1,000 square feet). Staff feels that there are not enough parking spaces within the existing parking lot to accommodate the required parking under the City's Zoning Ordinance.

Exhibit E shows the west, south, and north elevations of the existing building, addition, and the outdoor seating area that will be surrounded by fencing.

Exhibit F is the Business Plan submitted by the Applicants. The Applicants state, "Moses Allen is the owner of Moman Construction, a local construction company with deep roots within Rockford, who is viewed as a model business owner within the Middle Eastern community and his goal in this venture is to focus on the unique cultural needs of a vibrant Middle Eastern community" (Exhibit F).

The Applicants explain, "this business will provide a common Indian and Middle Eastern cultural experience where patrons share shisha (flavored tobacco) from a communal hookah or from one placed at each table or a bar and patrons must be at least 21 years of age to enter facility and patrons will be able to bring in their own drinks and food if they wish (Exhibit F). The Applicants state, "the lounge will sell no other products other than shisha (flavored tobacco), tobacco products will be sold at a central checkout location within the lounge, rental of hookahs and other than water, the lounge will provide no other beverage or food products" (Exhibit F). The Applicants, explain, "today, potential patrons travel 90 minutes to the City of Chicago to enjoy this cultural experience on a weekly basis, which is not only a safety concerns as these have become weekly outings, but also deprives the City of

Rockford the economic advantage of having this service enjoyed locally with money remaining in our city” (Exhibit F).

Furthermore, the Applicants state, “in the United States, hookah lounges are often owned and operated by people from the Middle East where hookah is a centuries-old tradition and our concept will incorporate such elements as Middle Eastern decor and music” (Exhibit F). The Applicants explain, “extensive upgrades to existing structure will need to be made in order to bring it to the standards needed for a successful operation and the Business alone is prepared to put in excess of \$150,000 in renovations and upgrades” (Exhibit F). Within Exhibit F, the hours and days of operation will be Monday through Sunday from 5:00 P.M. to Midnight. The Applicants explain “the existing Middle Eastern community within Rockford is eager to have a local hookah lounge to enjoy this cultural experience versus having to travel to a different city and initial marketing will be focused on spreading the work through the immigrant communities who would frequent this establishment as they do in their home country” (Exhibit F). The Applicants indicated on the application that they would hire private security Licensed with the State of Illinois upon written request of the tobacco commissioner.

Additionally, the Applicants explain, “the proposed lounge will take over the establishment of a former bank building on a major thoroughfare within the City of Rockford and the existing building will require transforming that building from a banking establishment to a hookah lounge” (Exhibit F). Finally, the Applicants state, “there are a number of vacant bank buildings within Rockford that have been vacant for years and LIT Hookah Lounge is willing to invest in transforming this building into a different concept thereby keeping a commercial business open in that facility with a state-of-the-art commercial air filtration system throughout the facility” (Exhibit F).

Exhibit G shows that there have been six (6) Calls of Service for the Police Department in the last 24 months for 2510 South Alpine Road.

The business plan indicates that customers will be able to bring their own food and beverages. A request for a liquor license was not applied for and customers may not bring their own liquor. The Applicant did not provide a site plan for staff’s review or provide an explanation of how the required parking would be satisfied. Finally, Staff feels that the interior plan submitted by the Applicant lacked detail, especially as it relates to seating and sales area. For these reasons, Staff does not support this request.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends **Denial** of the sale of tobacco products in conjunction with a hookah lounge in a C-3, General Commercial Zoning District.

SC: DM 10/8/20

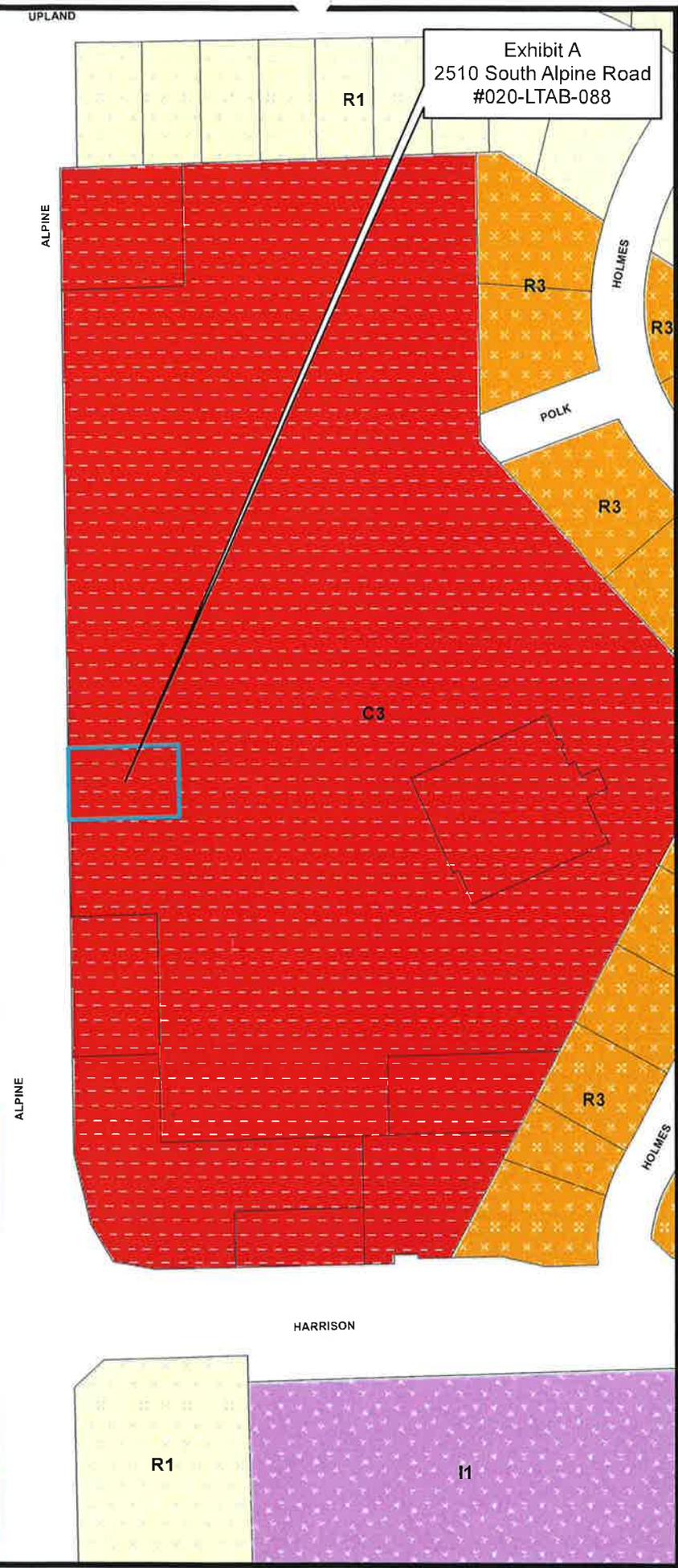
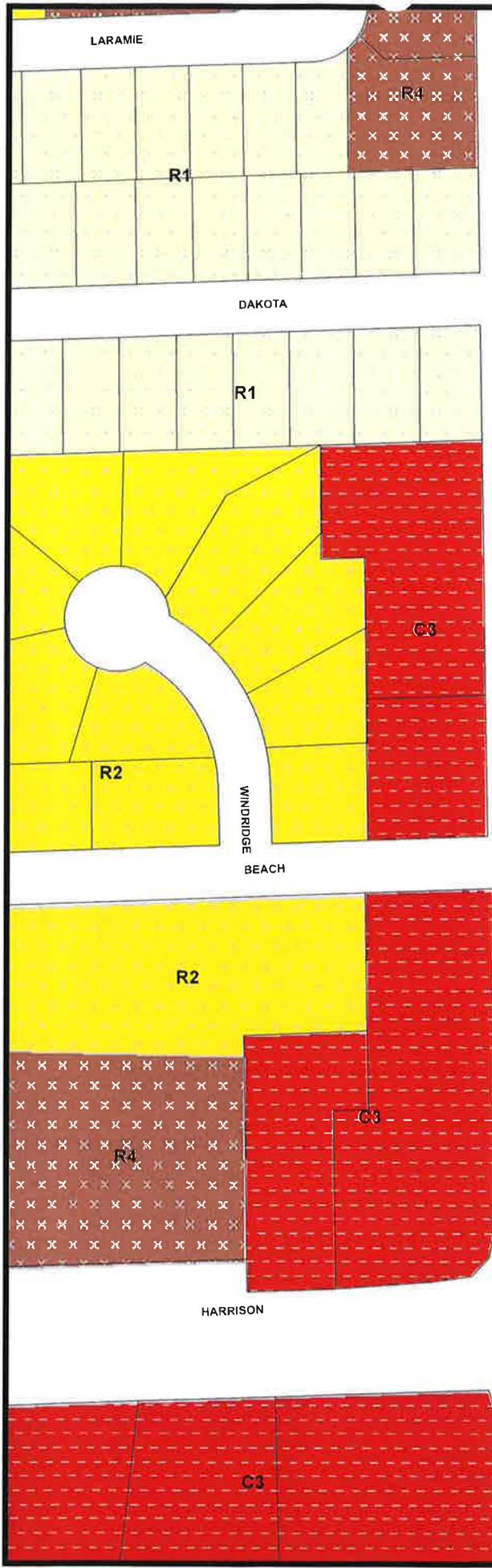
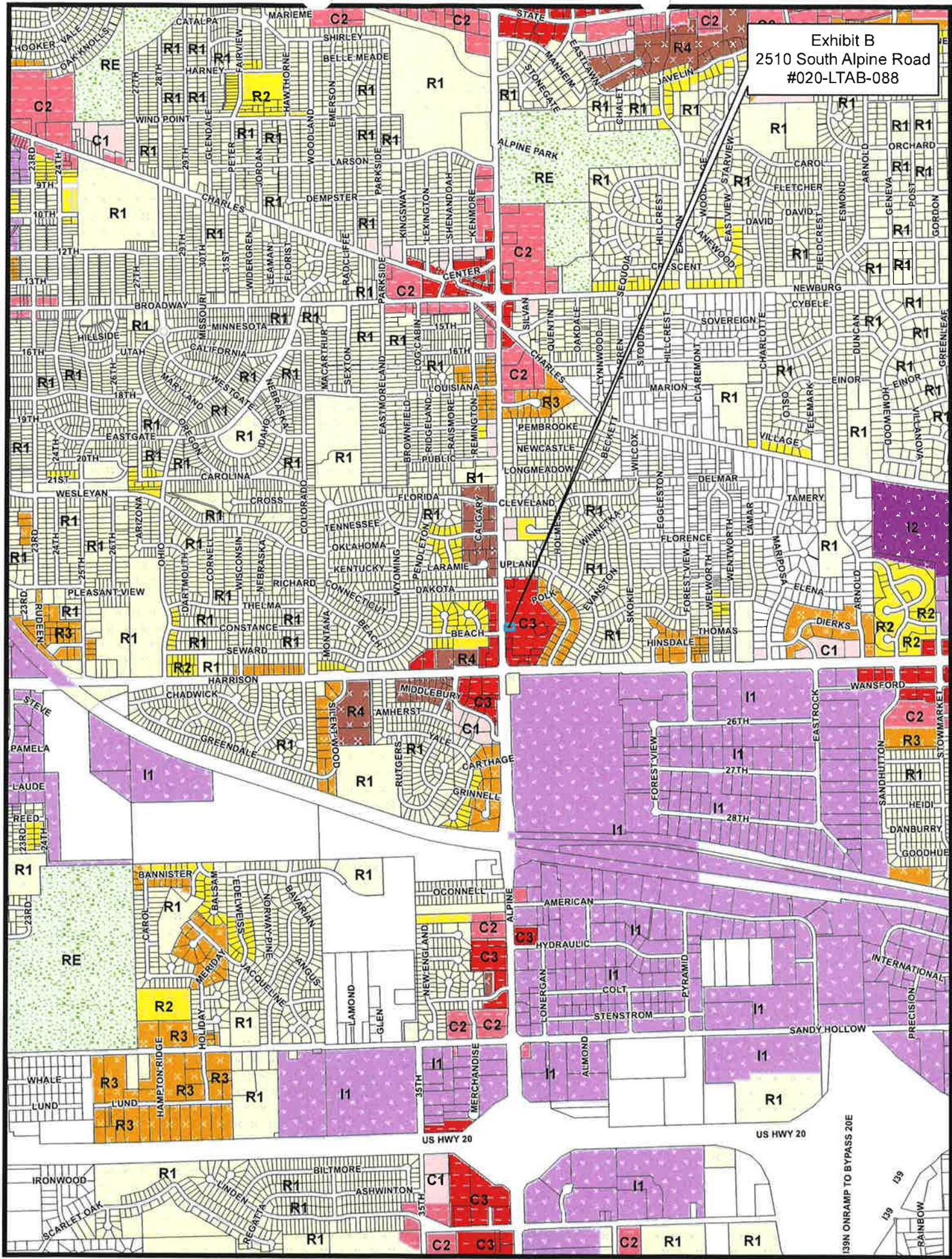


Exhibit B
2510 South Alpine Road
#020-LTAB-088



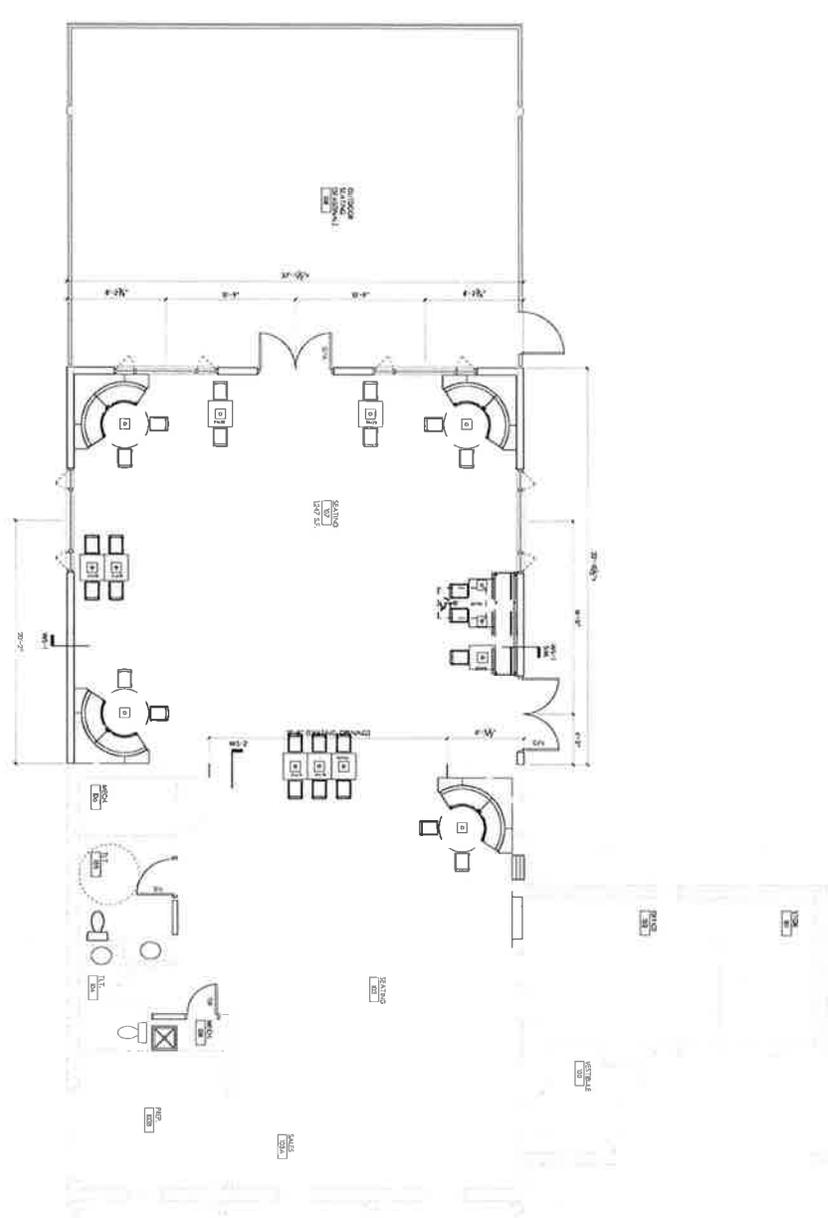
I39 ONRAMP TO BYPASS 20E

I39

RAINBOW



Exhibit C
2510 South Alpine Road
#020-LTAB-088



REVISED FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

ARCHITECTURAL SYMBOLS :

- AXIS
- 24x37 BUILDING SECTIONS
- 24x37 ROOM FLOOR & NUMBER
- 24x37 ROOM AREA & OCCUPANCY
- 24x37 ELEVATION MARK
- 24x37 WALL, TRIM, NUMBER, USE, A.D.I.
- 24x37 ROOM OFFICE NUMBER
- 24x37 SKILL
- 24x37 MAIN DETAIL
- 24x37 INTERNAL ELEVATION
- 24x37 DETAIL WALL
- 24x37 CHAMFER CORNER

REVISED FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

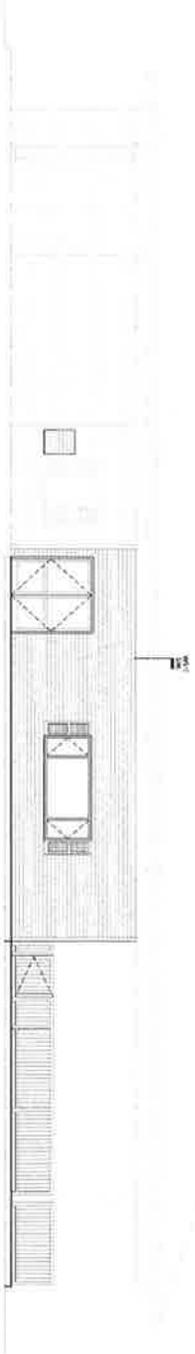
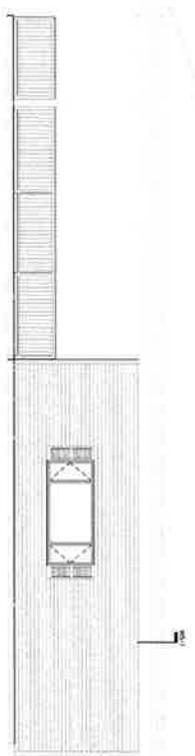
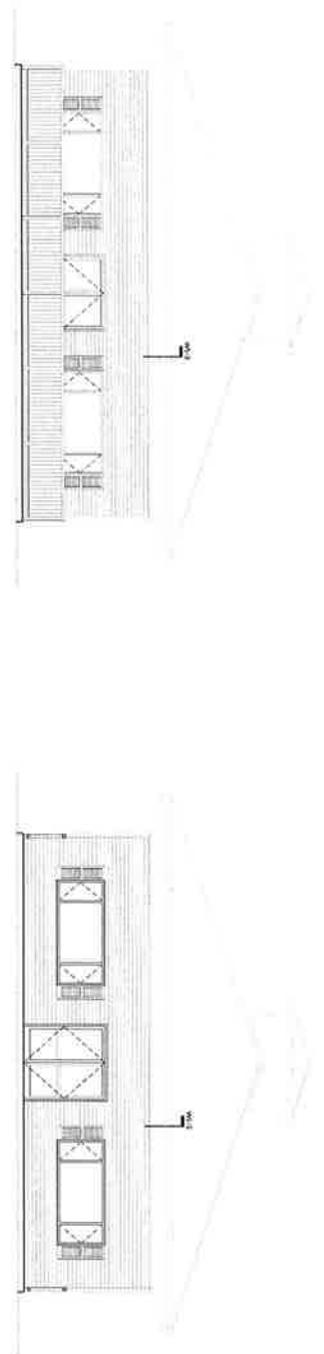
DATE: 06-14-20	ISSUED FOR: DATE
PROJECT NUMBER: 30085	
SHEET NUMBER: A.1.1	
DRAWN: APPROVED:	

A BUILDING RENOVATION FOR :
LIT HOOKAH BAR
 2510 S. ALPINE RD. ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61108



Larson & Darby G
 Architecture Engineering Inc

Registered Office: 1000 North Ave., Suite 500, Rockford, IL 61103, Tel: 815-498-2222 Fax: 815-498-2222



REVISED EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS
 SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

DATE: 08-14-20	ISSUED FOR: DATE
PROJECT NUMBER 30085	
SHEET NUMBER A3.1	
DRAWN	APPROVED

A BUILDING RENOVATION FOR :
LIT HOOKAH BAR
 2510 S. ALPINE RD. ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61108



Larson & Darby
 Architecture Engineering
 3000 E. State Street, Rockford, IL 61108

RECEIVED

SEP 08 2020

CITY OF ROCKFORD
LEGAL DEPARTMENT

**LIT HOOKAH BAR LLC
CORP BUSINESS PLAN**

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LIT Hookah Bar LLC, (hereinafter "Business") is formed as an Illinois S-Corporation with an anticipated location at 2510 S. Alpine Rd, Rockford, Illinois 61108.

Business Description. The Business is organized as a S-Corporation formed and authorized under the laws of the State of Illinois, and will be led by Moses Allen, who will serve as Owner.

Moses Allen is the owner of Moman Construction, a local construction company. He has deep roots within Rockford and is viewed as a model business owner within the Middle Eastern community. His goal in this venture is to focus on the unique cultural needs of a vibrant Middle Eastern community.

New Venue. This business will operate as follows:

Provide a common Indian and Middle Eastern cultural experience where patrons share shisha (flavored tobacco) from a communal hookah or from one placed at each table or a bar. The lounge will sell no other products other than shisha and rental of hookahs. Patrons must be at least 21 years of age to enter facility. Other than water, the lounge will provide no other beverage or food products. Patrons will be able to bring in their own drinks and food if they wish.

Today, potential patrons travel 90 minutes to the City of Chicago to enjoy this cultural experience on a weekly basis. This is not only a safety concerns as these have become weekly outings, but also deprives the City of Rockford the economic advantage of having this service enjoyed locally with money remaining in our city.

II. BUSINESS SUMMARY

The business is a start-up business, providing clients with share shisha (flavored tobacco).

Industry Overview. In the United States, hookah lounges are often owned and operated by people from the Middle East where hookah is a centuries-old tradition. Our concept will incorporate such elements as Middle Eastern decor and music.

Hours of Operation. 5pm - 12am - 7 days a week

Building Layout. See attached drawing. Extensive upgrades to existing structure will need to be made in order to bring it to the standards needed for a successful operation. The Business alone is prepared to put in excess of \$150,000 in renovations and upgrades.

Tobacco products will be sold at a central checkout location within the lounge. This building has adequate secured storage areas for inventory.

III. MARKETING SUMMARY

Target Markets. The main target markets for the business include:

- Middle Eastern Community

- Adults wanting to engage in a unique Indian and Middle Eastern cultural experience

The existing Middle Eastern community within Rockford is eager to have a local hookah lounge to enjoy this cultural experience versus having to travel to a different city. Initial marketing will be focused on spreading the word through the immigrant communities who would frequent this establishment as they do in their home country.

III. LOUNGE LOCATION

The proposed lounge will take over the establishment of a former bank building on a major thoroughfare within the City of Rockford. The existing building will require transforming that building from a banking establishment to a hookah lounge. There are a number of vacant bank buildings within Rockford that have been vacant for years. LIT Hookah Lounge is willing to invest in transforming this building into a different concept thereby keeping a commercial business open in that facility. In addition to these needed renovations, tenant will install a state-of-the-art commercial air filtration system throughout the facility.

Please note that calls are subject to change as Calls for Service are submitted. Offenses represent the initial call: not the verified offense.

City of Rockford Police Department Calls for Service For 9/24/2018 to 9/24/2020

Exhibit G
2510 South Alpine Road
#020-LTAB-088



CFS Number	CFSDate	Time	Reported Offense (Non-Verified)
18-121810	09/26/2018	15:43	2890 Disorderly Conduct
19-032677	03/22/2019	14:27	7977 Central Reporting Unit - DPR
19-099662	08/19/2019	10:40	7314 Alarm (burglary/robbery)
19-104926	08/30/2019	23:36	7314 Alarm (burglary/robbery)
19-107141	09/05/2019	5:57	7314 Alarm (burglary/robbery)
3-110305	09/12/2019	9:09	7314 Alarm (burglary/robbery)

6

Location

2510 S ALPINE RD
2510 S ALPINE RD

Please note that the Call for Service is specified for a property. Location is not specific to any person, place, or event. Call for service location is tied to the location to where the call was received.

Data obtained from NetRMS.
Produced: 9/29/2020 4:01:58PM