

**CITY OF MERRILL
Redevelopment Authority (RDA)**

**Tuesday, August 4th, 2015 at 8:00 a.m.
Location – City Hall Council Chambers 1004 East 1st Street**

AGENDA

Voting RDA Members: Bill Bialecki, Ryan Schwartzman, Amanda Kostman, Wally Smith,
Karen Karow, Jill Laufenberg, and Tony Kusserow

1. Call to order
2. Public Comment
3. Consider approval of meeting minutes from July 7th and July 13th, 2015
4. Review and discuss proposed Tax Increment District boundary amendments
5. Status update on Idle Sites grant activities (Tax Increment District No. 9)
6. Next RDA meeting(s) including 6:00 p.m. public hearing in early September
7. The RDA may convene in closed session per Wis. Stats. Sec. 19.85(1)(e) - deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session to consider:
 - a. Potential property acquisitions to facilitate redevelopment opportunities in Tax Increment District No. 9 (Wisconsin River area)
8. Adjournment

Agenda Prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl
Reviewed by RDA President Bill Bialecki

Note: A potential quorum of the Common Council could attend the meeting for information. There will be no Common Council action taken.

The Merrill City Hall is accessible to the physically disadvantaged. If special accommodations are needed, please contact the Merrill City Hall at 536-5594.

Date and time agenda was posted: _____ *Posted by:* _____

City of Merrill
Redevelopment Authority (RDA)

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Tuesday, July 7th, 2015 at 8:00 A.M.
City Hall Council Chambers

RDA Present: Bill Bialecki, Ryan Schwartzman, Karen Karow, Wally Smith,
Jill Laufenberg, Amanda Kostman, and Tony Kusserow

RDA Absent: None

Others: Alderpersons Dave Sukow, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Street Commissioner Dick Lupton, Ken Maule from Lincoln County Economic Development Corp., Mike Morrissey and Mary Rajek from Redevelopment Resources, City Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, Linda Berlin from Trophy Bar, and Kari Kufahl

Call to Order: Chair Bialecki called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Public Comment: None.

Approval of meeting minutes from June 2nd, 2015:

Motion (Smith/Schwartzman) to approve the meeting minutes. Carried.

Update regarding delinquent tax properties and City Administrator meeting with Lincoln County representatives:

City Administrator Johnson advised that he and Ken Maule from Lincoln County Economic Development Corp. (LCEDC) met with Lincoln County Clerk Chris Marlowe and Lincoln County Finance Director Dan Leydet. Maule and Johnson noted that an issue for Lincoln County is writing off some delinquent taxes. Johnson emphasized that the City is requesting that delinquent tax properties be foreclosed upon as soon as three-year delinquent so that the City can facilitate sale and return to tax-paying status.

Johnson indicated that the City is interested in four properties that are five or more year's tax delinquent. These include 1102 Van Buren St. (i.e. vacant home for about six years), 718-720 East 2nd St. (Merrill Glass), 202 East 1st St. (owner occupied home), and 501 East 2nd St. (City will be razing during July).

Discussion focused upon need for timely delinquent tax foreclosure process so that possible to rehabilitate instead of demo. City of Merrill is ending up mowing and snow shoveling sidewalks for many tax delinquent properties.

Update on 500 Block of East 2nd Street and implication for residential properties:

Unertl reported that three homes will be razed – all are tax delinquent properties and one has been vacant for number of years. These homes include: 501 East 2nd St., 509 E. 2nd St., and 104 Hendricks St. Given non-conforming lots, these sites will either remain vacant or potentially new garages might be constructed.

There are two homes on this block being rehabilitated and flipped after a mortgage foreclosure. Two additional homes are owned by an estate and are tax delinquent.

The majority of CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) low-interest residential loan applicants are being turned down due to lack of owner equity. Key to protecting City residential properties start with roofs. Unertl reported that City staff will continue discussions with TIF consultants on potential new TIF-funded forgivable loan program for reroofing of owner-occupied homes.

West side renewal planning meeting – Monday, July 13th at 6:00 p.m.:

Property and business owners on the west side have been invited to participate in west side renewal planning meeting. Mike Morrissey and Mary Rajek from Redevelopment Resources will be facilitating the input session.

This planning meeting will be posted as RDA meeting in case a quorum of the Authority's Commissioners are interested in attending.

Follow-up on Downtown Vision Plan potential implementation:

a. Update on former Guy's Shop vacant lot and engineering cost estimates for potential pocket park development:

There may be interest from some alderpersons to reconsider the potential purchase of the former Guy's Shop site from Lincoln Community Bank for \$20,000. In response to requests for more information on potential development costs, City Administrator Johnson requested assistance from engineering contractor Rod Akey. A design concept and potential construction cost estimates (about \$120,000) were distributed.

There would be two retaining walls on the south side of the property with proposed 8' terraces between the walls. Steps would be on the east side. ADA handicapped access would be from East Main Street (i.e. north side).

The majority of the site would be flat event/gathering space with potential small water fountain nozzle area. After discussion with Merrill Federal Savings & Loan representatives, it would be possible to use their adjacent lot as grass area in return for City mowing of the site and provision of liability insurance coverage.

Johnson emphasized that Merrill Federal Savings & Loan wants to retain ownership of their vacant lot for potential future use. Additional work is needed on their exposed wall before the site can be backfilled with dirt. Their landscaping plan is to dump rock on their property to eliminate need for grass mowing.

b. Discussion of additional potential implementation steps and budget requests:

Street Commissioner Dick Lupton reported that the Street Department's new striping truck will be operational shortly. Angle parking will be implemented the three blocks extending from Courtside Furniture to past the Cosmo Theatre. City Administrator Johnson advised that the bituminous paving should be done by mid-July. Wi-Fi equipment has been ordered, including additional units to extend coverage to proposed S. Park St. pavilion/trailhead for the River Bend Trail.

Unertl emphasized that the critical next step for implementation is Wisconsin Public Service shift of overhead electrical lines to underground. Other utilities (such as telephone and Cable TV) are also likely involved. City Administrator Johnson will again contract WPS for price quote. The City-owned parking lot south of River Street is going to need reconstruction after utilities installed underground. Unertl suggested that potential reconstruction of East Main Street and installation of new decorative streetlighting was probably a couple years out.

The City of Merrill has over \$150,000 in potential low-interest façade loan funding available. Unertl will send information to property and business owners on availability of potential loan and TIF façade funding.

Status update on Idle Sites grant activities (Tax Increment District No. 9):

City of Merrill has received the signed Idle Site grant agreement from Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. (WEDC). The grant period extends through December 31st, 2017.

The River Bend Trail Foundation has funded the \$29,560 purchase of land and metal storage building just east of the Center Avenue bridge from Wisconsin Public Service. Information on their trailhead and future trail development plans were included in the RDA agenda packet.

Next RDA meeting: Tuesday, August 4th at 8:00 a.m. When a potential TIF public hearing at 6:00 p.m. is needed, RDA Commissioners suggested a Wednesday meeting preference.

Adjournment: Motion (Schwartzman/Smith) to adjourn. Carried at 8:38 a.m.

Minutes prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl

City of Merrill
Redevelopment Authority (RDA)

Tuesday, July 13th, 2015 at 6:00 P.M.
City Hall Council Chambers

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RDA Present: Bill Bialecki, Ryan Schwartzman, Wally Smith,
Amanda Kostman, and Tony Kusserow

RDA Absent: Jill Laufenberg and Karen Karow

Others: Alderpersons Dave Sukow, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Ken Maule from Lincoln County Economic Development Corp., Kristen Fish, Mike Morrissey and Mary Rajek from Redevelopment Resources, and about twenty interested property, business, or home owners

Call to Order: Chair Bialecki called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Westside Renewal Plan Input:

Bialecki turned the meeting over to Kristen Fish of Redevelopment Resources.

Fish and Rajek highlighted several downtown and west side façade projects, as well as available redevelopment programs.

Input was solicited at the meeting, as well as through comment forms. See attached summary prepared by Redevelopment Resources.

Adjournment: Meeting informally adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Minutes prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl



REDEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Summary: Westside Business District Renewal Plan Meeting
July 13, 2015 6:00-8:00PM

Attendance: 31 area stakeholders, including:

Kristen Fish, Mary Rajek & Mike Morrissey - Redevelopment Resources
Mayor Bill Bialecki, Kathy Unertl, Dave Johnson, Tom Hayden, Dave Johnson – City of Merrill
Amanda Kostman, Tony Kusserow, Wally Smith, – City of Merrill RDA
Dave Sukow, District Alderman, City of Merrill
Ken Maule – Lincoln County EDC

Purpose: Provide information on the Westside Renewal Plan as well as Local Business Support Programs; solicit feedback and input on specific sites as well as Westside Renewal Plan in general.

Presentation: A) Westside Renewal Plan
B) Local Business Support Programs

Feedback:

- A) Attract more retail
 - Residents of public housing would like to walk to shops
 - Would like small local shops to attract tourists
 - Convenience retail / grocery / services
- B) Build more surface parking
 - Parking for downtown users
- C) Cross walks with flashing lights or other pedestrian aids
 - Traffic needs to be slowed down on Grand Ave. and Main St.
- D) Something that creates energy and attracts residents and shoppers
 - Some would like a space to rent for special events
- E) Signage denoting what's on the west side, directions to Mark, wayfinding signage
 - People need to capitalize on the traffic going through the West Side
- E) General Feedback
 - Parking is an issue
 - Most important of all: Positive Attitude for Merrill and its possibilities
 - West Side has become an afterthought, needs attention
 - Sign ordinance is too restrictive
 - Business owners need to know what's going on with new jobs/ business
 - Would like to capitalize on the river walk
 - Is there a West Side Business Association?



REDEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Feedback Cards

1. Do you believe that Merrill's Westside has reached its full potential as an economic engine for the City of Merrill? (Y/N, comment)
Yes: 0 No: 7 No Answer: 1
 - ✓ It has become an afterthought that is underserved.
 - ✓ I think it can be highlighted as a draw of traffic east to west, MARC, Council Grounds
 - ✓ Little owner investment
 - ✓ Lack of pride by property owners in many cases
 - ✓ More parking; Wire Products building – tear down make a parking lot, or put workers in the building.

2. Have you heard feedback from your customers about the condition of Merrill's Westside (positive or negative)? (Y/N, comment)
Yes: 3 No: 3 No Answer: 0
 - ✓ It's not what your building looks like it's the quality of work being done inside the building.
 - ✓ Lack of parking
 - ✓ Blighted Buildings
 - ✓ Positive-people do love the area-it is fond area of community/city
 - ✓ "Nothing left on the Westside"

3. How do you see yourself and/or your business participating in the Westside Renewal efforts?
 - ✓ I desire to be a profitable business, a part of a viable eclectic community
 - ✓ I put a new roof on in 2009. I painted in 2014. That's all that I can afford!! Period
 - ✓ Putting money that I have back into my building/business not borrowing it. But will borrow at 0%.
 - ✓ Yes I have a new awning ordered
 - ✓ Would like to have windows
 - ✓ We live in a beautiful historic Westside home. We are contributing by maintaining/up grading our property. Don't ignore homeowners! Removing blighted housing is good.
 - ✓ My business 409 W Main renovated the old Burmans Floral into Sweeter Times Antiques & Candy synergistic with Zinters and an adjunct to the other Antique shops. Tourists like to go to small unique shops
 - ✓ Major Player – Housing Authority – Tax Credit Redevelopment

4. Would you be interested in obtaining more information on programs available to support business with improvements to building exteriors/interiors and/or business assistance? If so, please provide contact information.
#Requests: 3

Contact Information Received (individuals interested in more information and/or project involvement)

Miller Furniture
Stephanie Monka Springborn
Farmers Insurance

City of Merrill – Proposed Tax Increment District Boundary Amendments

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TID No. 3 (Mixed Use):

New parcels include the former car wash (east of Associated Bank) and the former Lincoln County Fairgrounds property. It was necessary to include two cemeteries in order to connect with an apartment building on Memorial Drive that is four years tax delinquent (over \$40,000) and appears to need property maintenance.

TID No. 6 (“Blighted Area”):

Additional downtown parcels are proposed to be included in the TID. Only exceptions will be the Lincoln County Courthouse, BMO-owned parcels, and Merrill Housing Authority’s Jenny Towers. The new City of Merrill fire station property will be removed from the TID.

All residential properties adjacent to the existing TID No. 6 boundary are proposed to be included (i.e. from Cleveland Street extending west to Prairie River Middle School). There are several tax delinquent properties, some properties needing exterior maintenance, and some homes that clearly need new roofs. The blunt reality is some additional residential demos are likely in this area (i.e. including adjacent to 500 block of East 2nd Street).

TID No. 7 and TID No. 10 (“Blighted Area”):

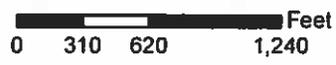
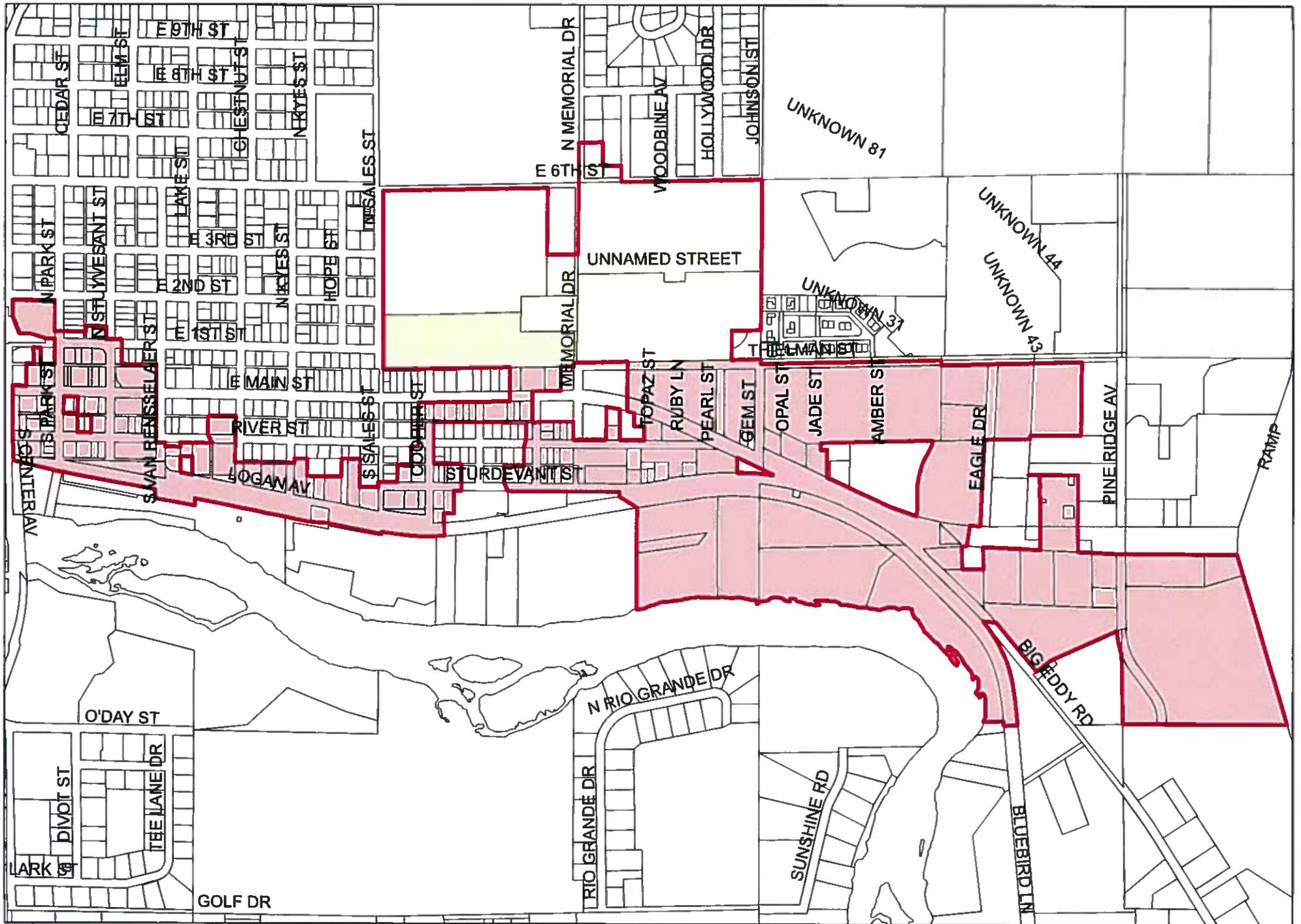
The former Fox Point parcel is being split out of TID No. 7 and a new TID No. 10 created. The assessment reduction on the Fox Point parcel causes no tax increment to be generated for TID No. 7. The middle of Lincoln County Highway G is the current border of the City of Merrill.

	Assessed Valuation		
	Land	Improved	Total
2010	\$29,000	\$676,600	\$705,600
2014	\$43,400	\$289,800	\$333,200
Change	\$14,400	(\$386,800)	(\$372,400)

As far as TID No. 7, numerous residential parcels are proposed to be added. These additional include a number of delinquent tax parcels; inclusion of more properties located in the area of former Northern Specialty/Haunted Sawmill on Hendricks Street; and an area on Douglas Street. All properties that had an assessed improved valuation of less than \$30,000 – especially if rental property – were generally included.

TID No. 8 (“Blighted Area”):

Several properties south of West Main Street to Stange Street are proposed to be added to facilitate future redevelopment (such as former Lincoln County Bank/St. Vincent). South Genessee Street has been identified for future infrastructure improvement. Unfortunately, there are some tax delinquent residential properties.

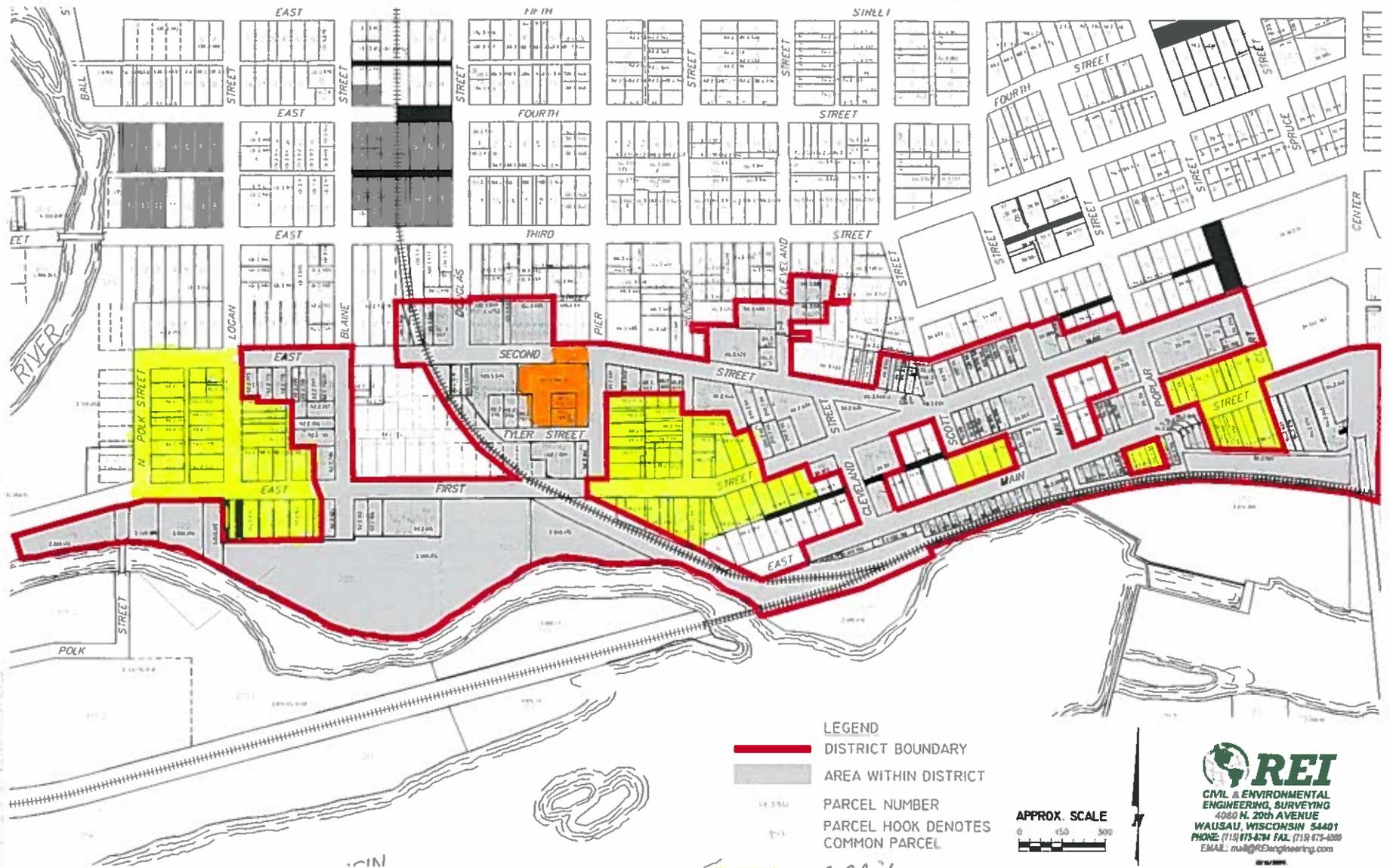


City of Merrill TID #3

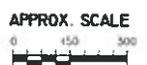
Legend

- Boundary
- Added Parcels

TAX INCREMENT DISTRICT #6



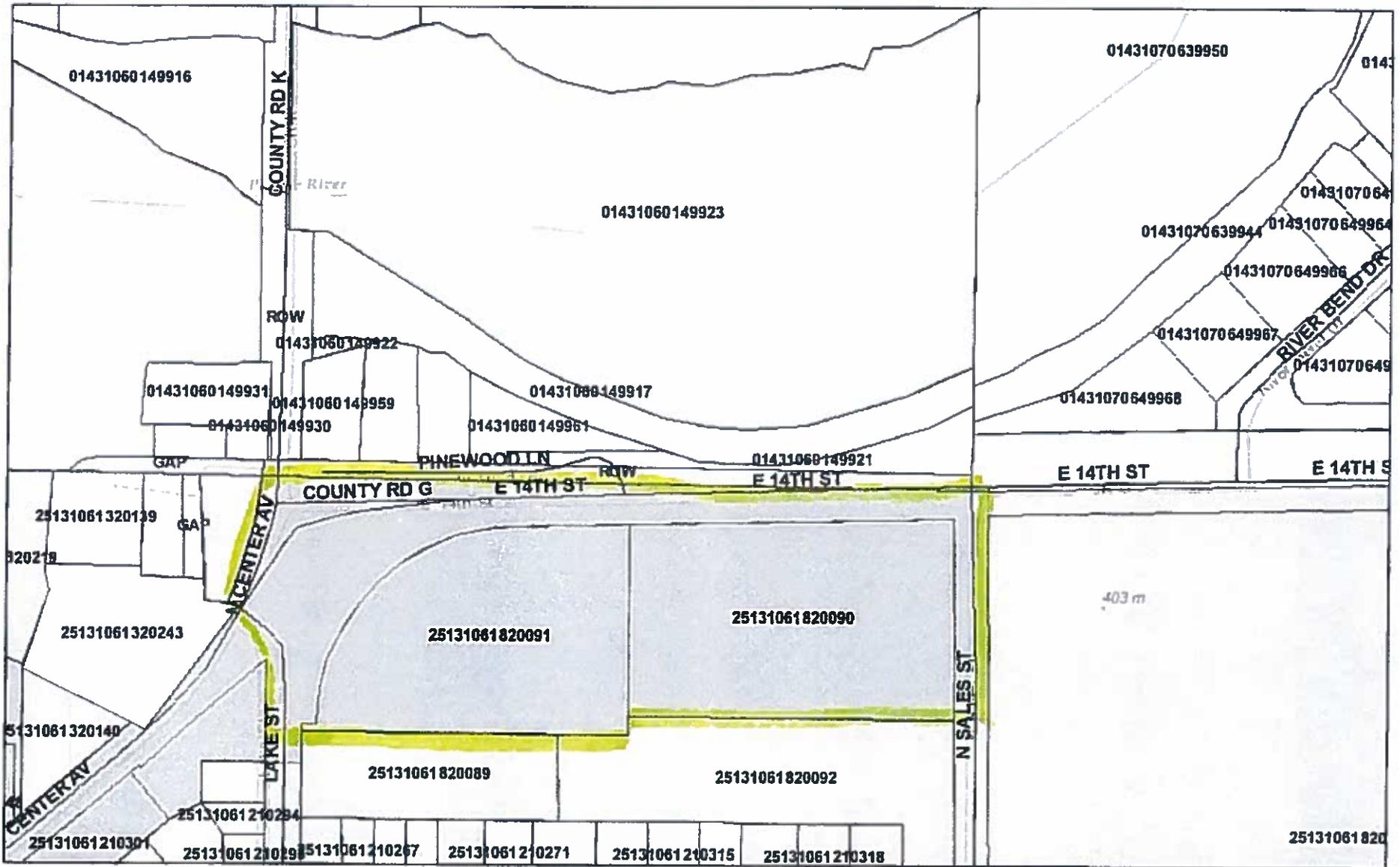
- LEGEND**
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY
 - AREA WITHIN DISTRICT
 - PARCEL NUMBER
 - PARCEL HOOK DENOTES COMMON PARCEL



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 EMAIL: mail@REIEngineering.com

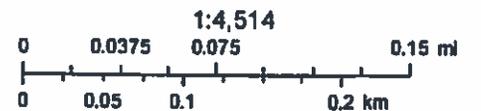
Additions
 Deleted (New Fire Station)

City of Merrill's Tax Increment Districts

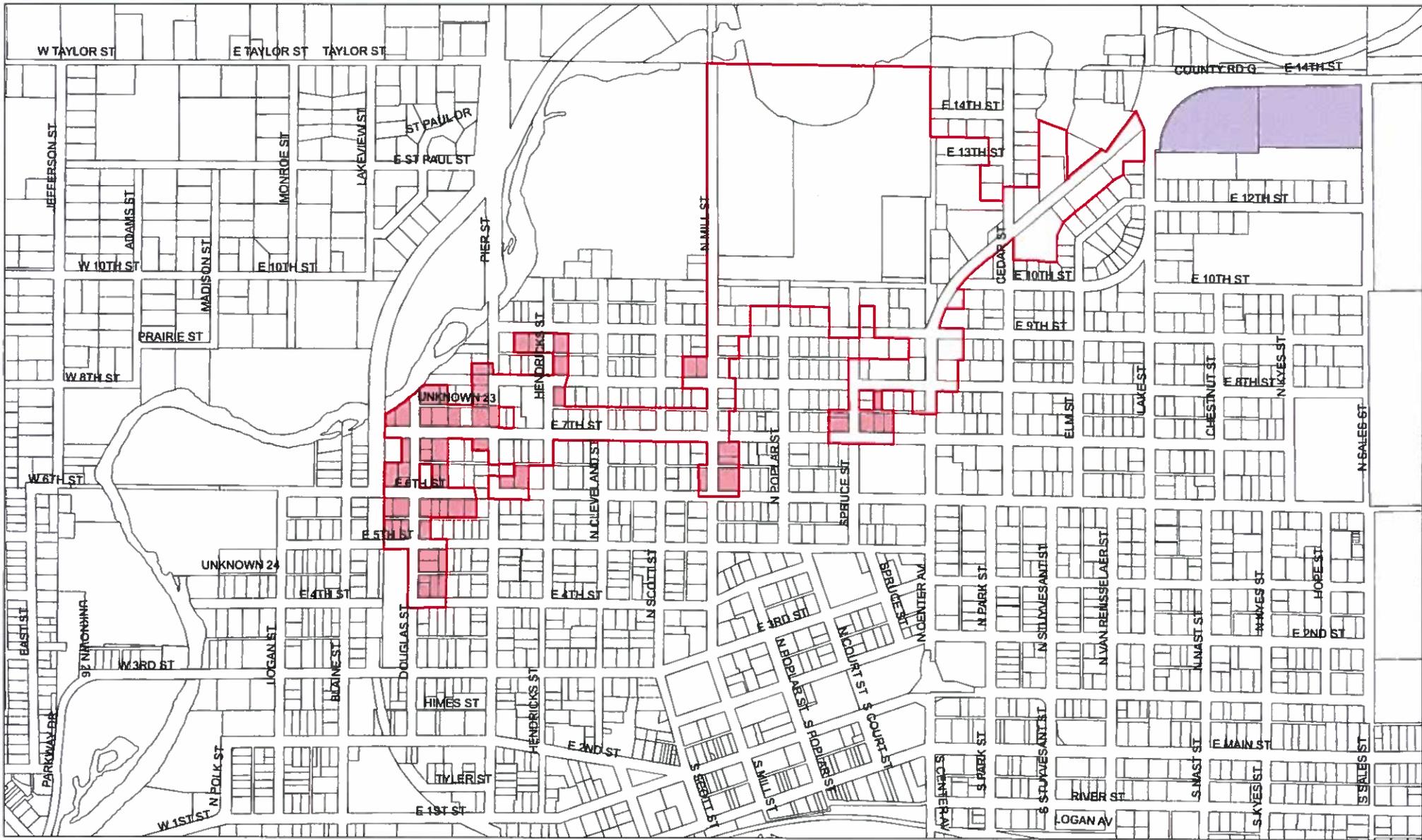


July 27, 2015

TID No. 10

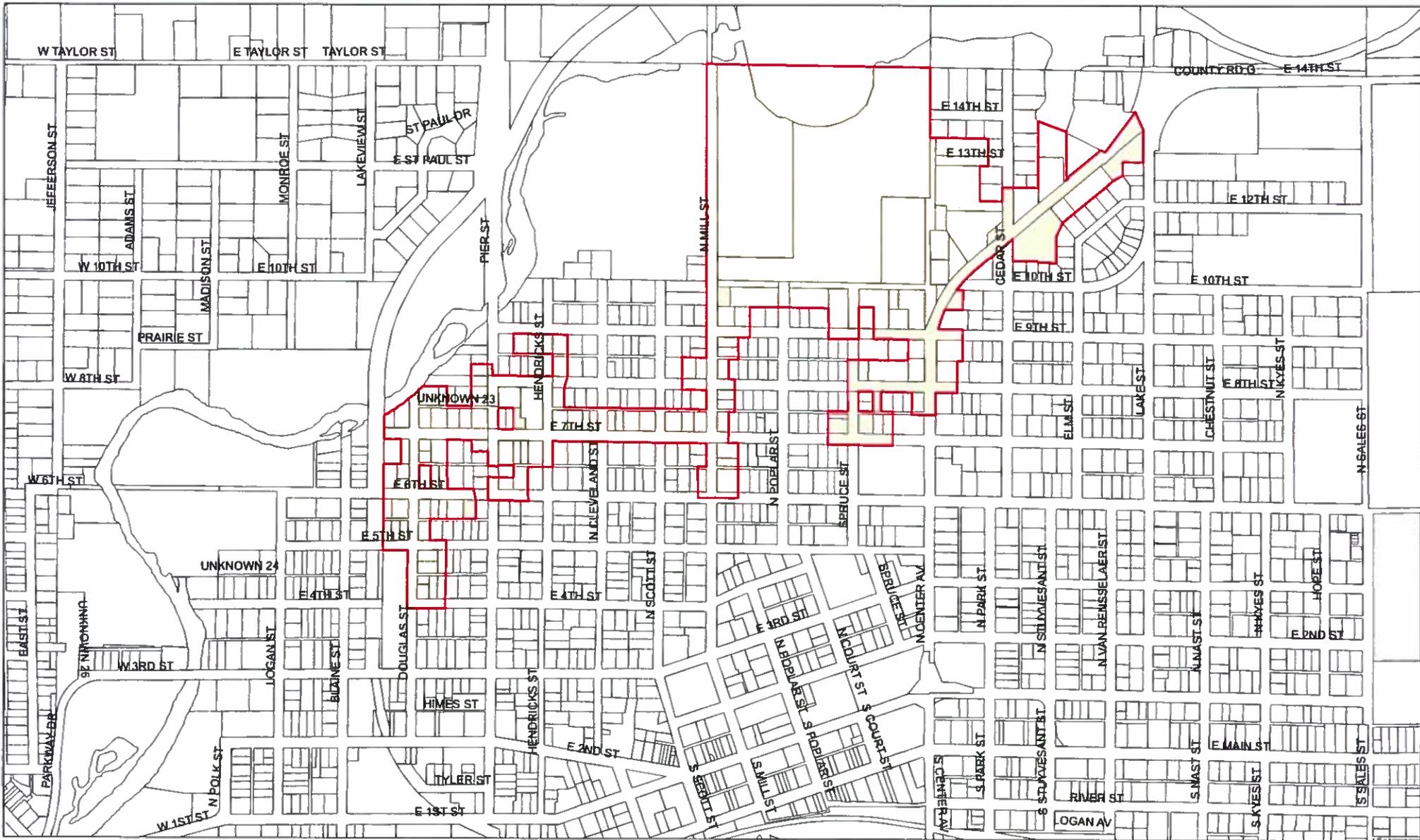


Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey,



City of Merrill TID #7
Added & Deleted Parcels

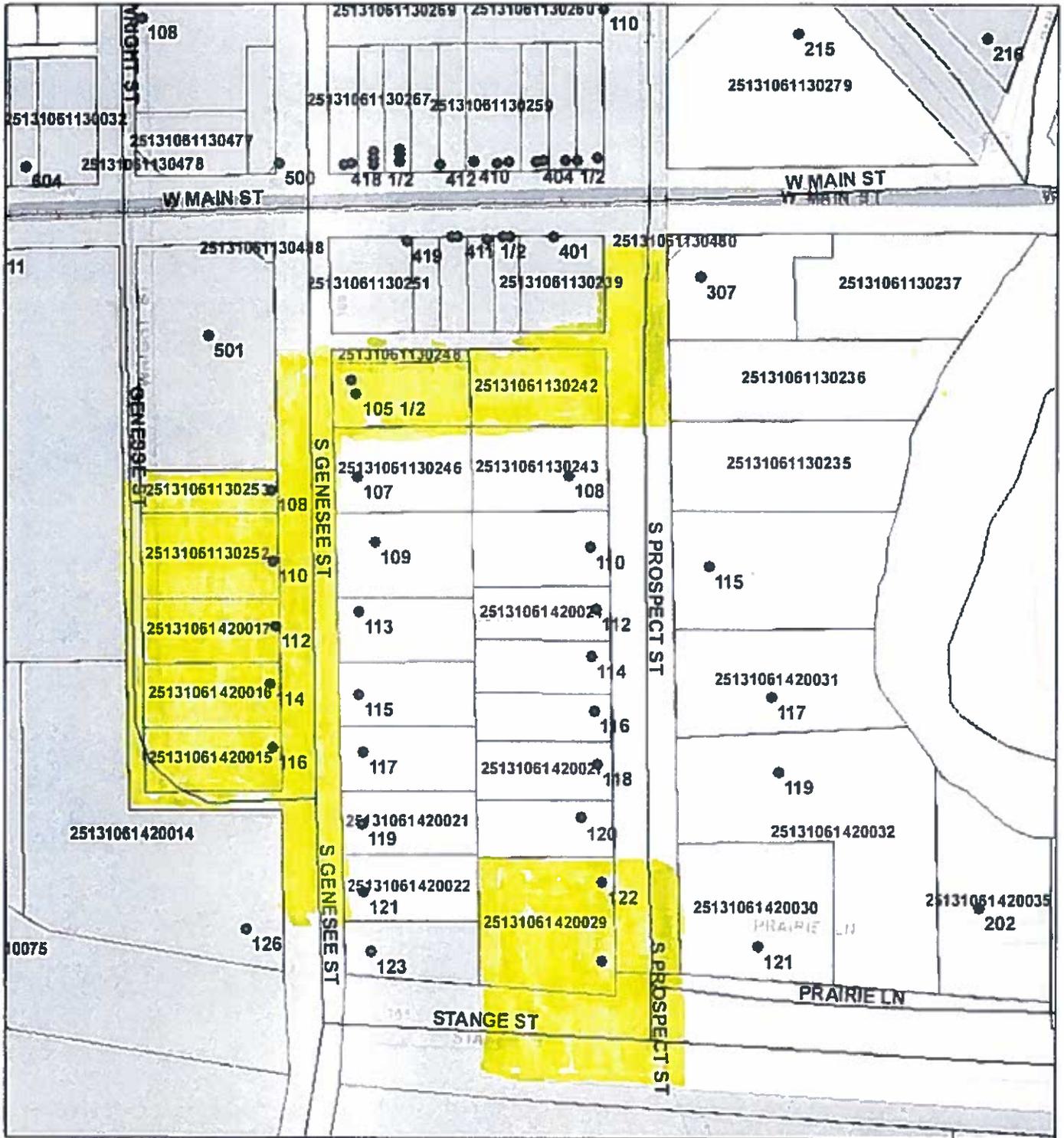




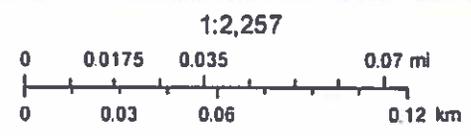
City of Merrill TID #7
Boundary Area



City of Merrill's Tax Increment Districts



July 20, 2015

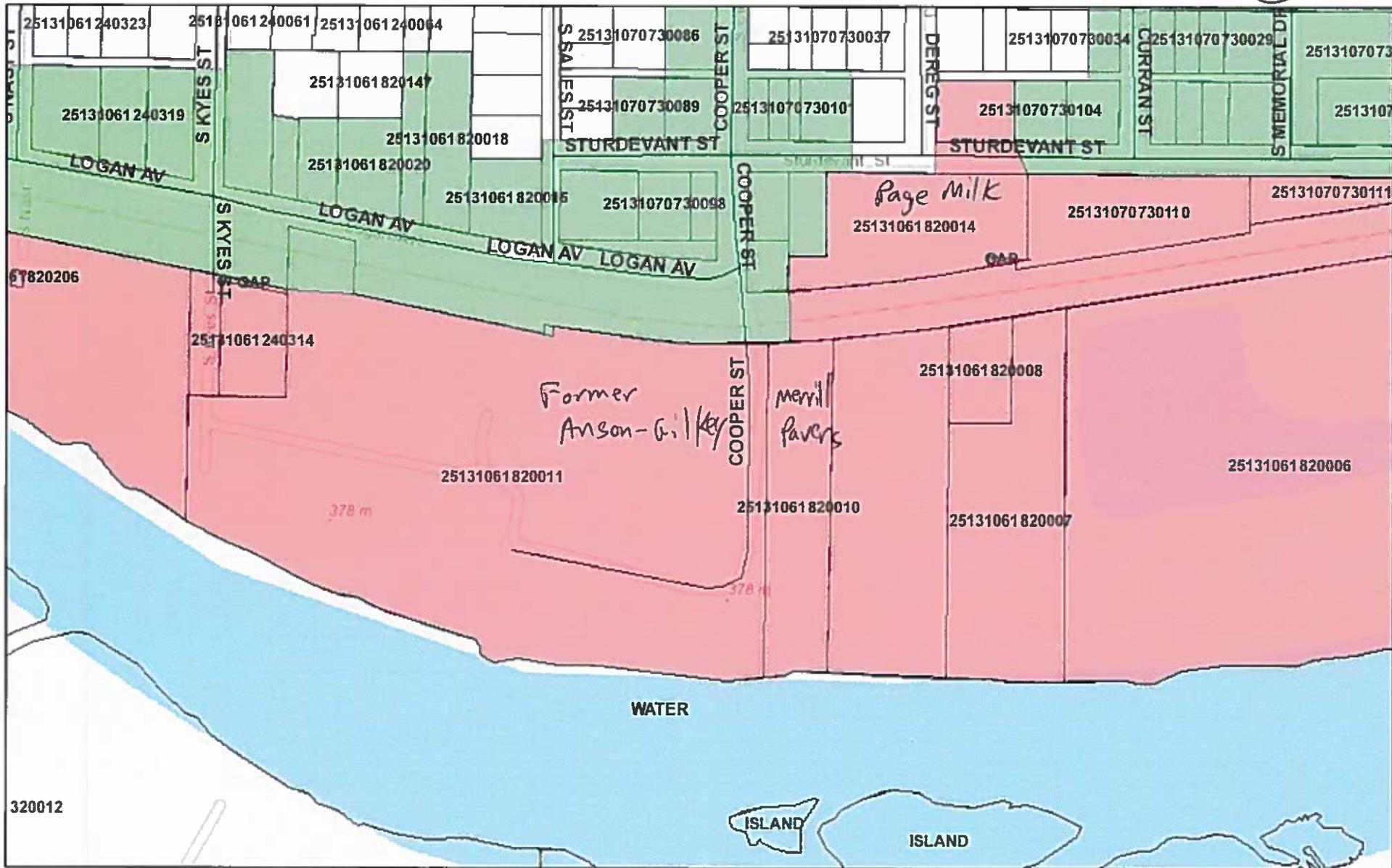


*TED No. 8
 Amendment
 Additions*

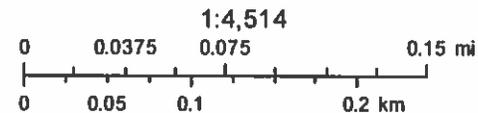
Source: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

City of Merrill's Tax Increment Districts

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July 31, 2015



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey.