



*Community Planning Site Design Development Economics Landscape Architecture*

March 5, 2008

Ms. Maria Lasday  
City Administrator  
City of Highwood  
17 Highwood Avenue  
Highwood, IL 60040

Dear Ms. Lasday:

Teska Associates Inc. (TAI) has reviewed the application of Highland Park NRC Reality, LLC for the expansion of Highland Park Nursing Home, with documents provided to Teska by the applicant. The documents include petition for variation, zoning analysis, site plan, floor plans, elevations, and landscape plan. In addition to reviewing the submitted documents, TAI met with the applicant and completed a site visit on February 22, 2007. TAI has reviewed the development for the following areas: existing conditions, summary of development proposal, conformance with 1996 Comprehensive Plan, zoning review, site plan review, and establishment of the permanent open space.

#### **I. Summary**

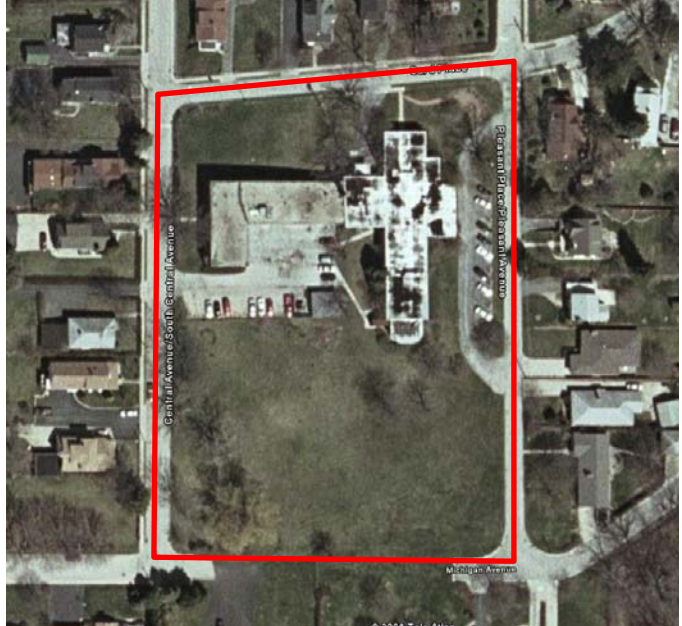
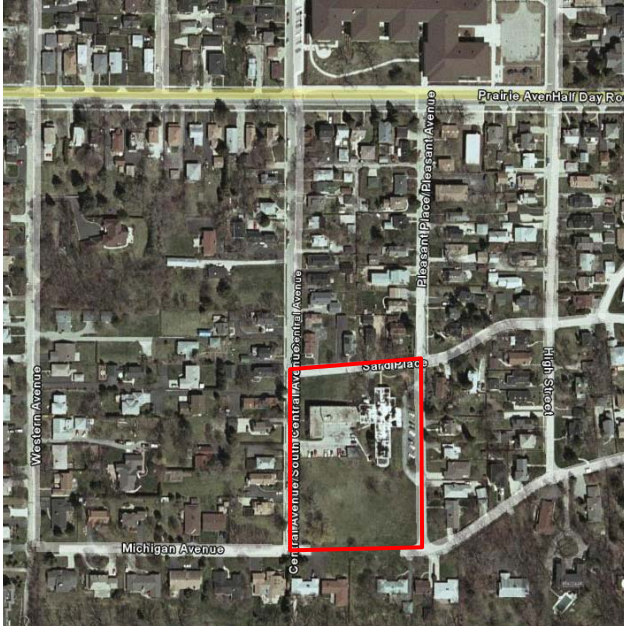
|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Applicant:        | Highland Park NRC Reality, LLC   |
| Address:          | 50 Pleasant Avenue   |
| Lot Size:         | Total: 2.8 acres (122,969 sq/ft)<br>Highland Park Nursing Home: 1.96 acres (85,377 sq/ft)<br>Open space dedicated through conservation easement: 0.84 acres (36,590 sq/ft) |
| Zoning:           | R-1 Residential District   |
| Use:              | Current and proposed: nursing home   |
| Services offered: | Skilled nursing  |
| Beds:             | Existing: 95<br>Proposed: 104  |
| Peak Staff Shift: | 32 (day)   |
| Parking Spaces:   | Proposed: 57   |
| Action Requested: | Zoning, site plan review and variance to allow an expansion of an existing non-conforming use.   |

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**Teska Associates, Inc.**

## II. Existing Conditions

The 2.8 acre site is bounded by Pleasant Avenue to the east, Sard Place to the north, South Central Avenue to the west and vacated Michigan Avenue to the South. The site is currently improved with an nursing home facility, with an existing 95 beds. The site has approximately 38 parking spaces, including 15 spaces accessed off Pleasant Avenue for guest parking and ambulatory services. Employee parking is accessed off South Central Avenue and the complex's loading facilities are accessed of Sard Place. Due to the significant site grade difference from the east to west, the second floor western most portion of the building is cantilevered over an at-grade parking lot.



## III. Development Proposal Details

### Summary and Purpose

The purpose of the expansion is to modernize the facility by reconfiguring the existing internal layout and expanding it. Though a new wing is being added, the additions will only add 9 new rooms, because most of the existing rooms will be expanded and improved (attached private bathrooms for each room, etc) to make them more suitable for a contemporary facility. In addition to the building expansion, the applicant proposes other improvements including reconfiguration of the parking lot, relocation of the service drive, façade and landscaping improvements, and establishment of public open space.

### Phases:

Highland Park NRC Reality, LLC proposes to expand and improve the existing facility in a three phase process. See Plan A102 for details.

The first phase is composed of the construction of a new wing on the south end of the building which includes both new and reconfigured patient rooms, each with an adjoining private bathroom. The first phase also includes a new second floor dining room, and a beauty shop, arts/crafts room, offices, multi-purpose room, classroom/meeting room, and new mechanical room on the first floor.

The second and third phases include two small additions on the east side of the existing facility primarily to provide enough area for private baths for each room, and reconfiguring of existing spaces on both the first and second floor.

#### Stormwater Detention

The expansion of the nursing home increases the total amount of impervious surface on-site so that the applicant is required to provide stormwater detention. The applicant is proposing to install a dry detention facility on the southwest corner of the site, which will later be dedicated as public open space, through a mechanism such as a conservation easement. The City Engineer should review the stormwater detention facility to ensure that it meets the detention requirements of the newly expanded building.

#### Employment

The number of employees on-site will depend upon the time of day. The peak employment shift will be during the day with 32 employees; however the number of employees will be reduced to 15 during the night shift and 5 during the evening shift.

#### Parking

The facility will include 57 off-street parking spaces in the form of a 42 space lot accessed off Central Avenue and a 15 space lot accessed off Pleasant Avenue. The applicant notes that residents do not drive and thus do not use any of the parking spaces. With a peak shift of 32 employees during the day, there will be at least 15 guest parking spaces available at all times. It should be noted that many family members visit the facility at night or on weekends, periods which have less staff on-site, thus excess guest parking is available. All employees should be required to park in the parking lot accessed off of Central Avenue, and reserve the 15 parking spaces accessed off Pleasant Avenue as guest and handicapped accessible spaces.

#### Façade

The applicant proposes to make architectural improvements to the existing building including enhanced roof articulations and façade details. The building expansions will include brick to match the building's existing brick color.

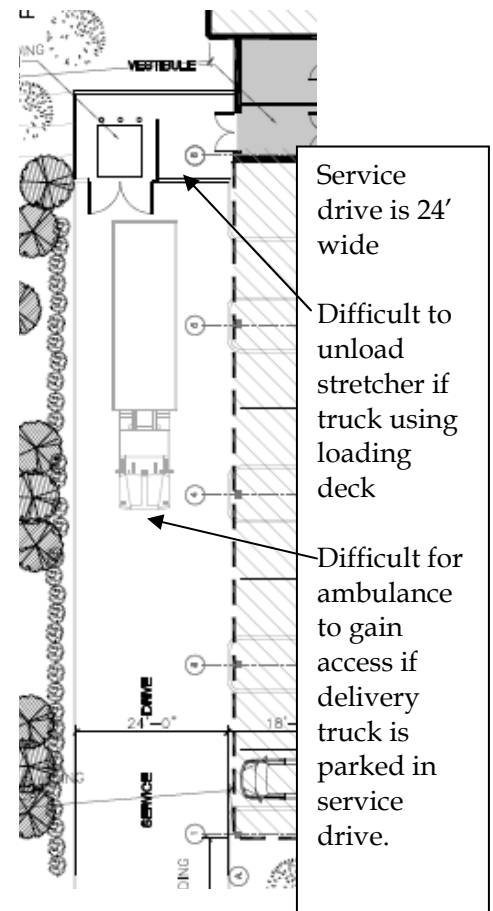
#### Loading / Ambulance Access

The applicant proposes to remove the existing loading facility off Sard Place and built a new 24' wide loading facility off Central Avenue. Though the drive is wide enough for 2 vehicles, there is some concern that a service truck could block ambulance access. Furthermore, the proposed loading dock would also house a garbage dumpster, which would make it difficult for a stretcher to be pulled out if the service dock is being used by a truck. To allow for safe ambulance access, the application should either maintain the existing loading facility off of Sard Place for ambulance access or redesign the proposed loading area with a physical barrier to ensure there is dedicated space for ambulance access.

### **IV. Conformance with 1996 Comprehensive Plan**

The 1996 Comprehensive Plan has three major goals:

- Preserve single family residential neighborhoods
- Enhance the Downtown – a traditional mixed use district
- Reintegrate Fort Sheridan



Though the Plan does not specifically address the subject site, it is the professional opinion of Teska Associates, Inc. that the proposal follows the goals and principles of the Comprehensive Plan, subject to recommendations below regarding Zoning and Site Plan Review. The applicant plans to make significant building and site improvements and establishment of permanent open space, all of which are highly encouraged in the Plan. Although the project is in a residential area, it is an existing use that would be improved with the addition of only nine new beds and no, or minimal, increase in traffic or parking.

#### V. Zoning Review and Variations

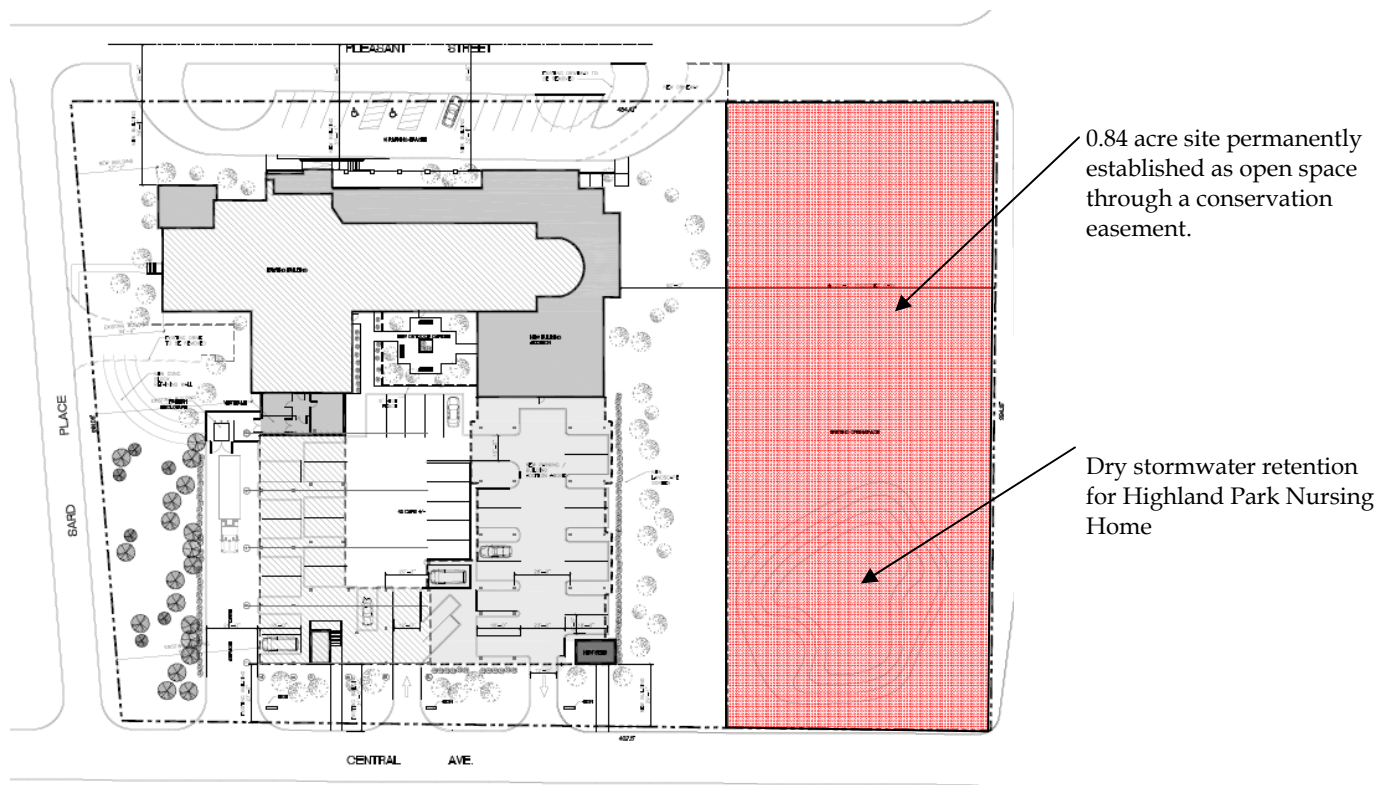
|   | <b>Required /Allowed</b>                               | <b>Provided</b>   | <b>Variation Needed</b>   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Minimum Lot Size</b>                 | 87,120 sq/ft   | 122,969 sq/ft   | None  |
| <b>Minimum Lot Width</b>                | 125'   | 291'  | None  |
| <b>Height</b>                           | 35'  | 42' max at peak of ridge  | Depends on mid-point of ridge   |
| <b>Front Yard</b>                       | 50' on Pleasant Avenue, Sard Place, and Central Avenue | 32' feet on Pleasant Avenue, 37'7" on Sard Place, and 29'1" on Central Avenue | 18' feet on Pleasant Avenue, 12'5" on Sard Place, and 20'11" on Central Avenue                |
| <b>Side Yard</b>                        | 10'  | 35'5"   | None  |
| <b>Structure Lot Coverage</b>           | 33.3%  | 13.8%   | None  |
| <b>Parking Screening</b>                | Required for 6 or more cars                            | Parking is screened   | None  |
| <b>Stall/ Aisle Size</b>                | 9' x 23' x 23'   | 9' x 23' x 23'  | None  |
| <b>Off-Street Loading Location</b>      | Not permitted in front or side yard                    | Located in front yard   | Off-street loading facilities to be located in front yard as rear yard will remain open space |
| <b>Off-Street Screening Requirement</b> | 5' min. wall or fence                                  | 5' wall   | None  |
| <b>Lighting</b>                         | 0.5 ftc maximum at property line                       | Will not exceed 0.5 ftc at property line                                      | None  |
|   |  |   |   |

As indicated in the above table, the applicant needs variations for front yard setbacks, and off-street parking location.

A variance to allow an expansion of an existing non-conforming use will be required. The improvements to the building, site, and additional public open space are public benefits to support this zoning variance.

## VII. Establishment of Public Open Space

In addition to the site and building improvements, the applicant will establish a 125' x 295' (0.84 acres) parcel of the site as a permanent open space for public use. The applicant has proposed the use of a conservation easement. A conservation easement would be a legal agreement between the HP Nursing Home and the City of Highwood that permanently limits the use of that land as open space for public use. A conservation easement protects the interests of the City and neighboring residents in that the land will be used only as open space or improved park area. The City and applicant will work with the neighborhood to determine the future use of the area as open space. A portion of the 0.84 acres will also serve as a dry stormwater detention basin for the Highland Park Nursing Home. The Highwood City Attorney should work with the applicant to ensure the conservation easement is established to allow for the use of the area as a neighborhood park. In addition, the City would be responsible for any improvements and maintenance of the open space including stormwater detention.



## **VI. Site Plan Review / Summary Issues for Consideration**

Teska has reviewed the proposed site plan, floor plans, and elevations submitted dated January 30, 2008. To ensure a high quality development, Teska offers the following comments:

1. Maintain the existing loading facility off of Sard Place and/or physically separate the service drive to allow for ambulance access.
2. Require applicant to make all physical improvements to open space and stormwater detention facility before leasing to City.
3. Require employees to park in lot accessed off Central Avenue.
4. If the application is approved, condition the approval on the establishment of a conservation easement that would allow for use as a neighborhood park.

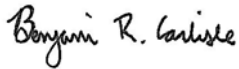
5. The Highwood City Attorney should work with the applicant to ensure the conservation easement is established to allow for the use of the area as a neighborhood park.
6. The City Engineer should review the stormwater detention facility to ensure that it meets the detention requirements of the newly expanded building.

Teska Associates, Inc. is pleased to provide the comments described above to the City of Highwood in its review of the proposal for the renovation and expansion of Highland Park Nursing Facility.

Sincerely,



Scott L. Goldstein, AICP  
Principal



Benjamin R. Carlisle  
Associate