

City of Columbus, Wisconsin

Tower Drive Property Residential Development REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Issued: October 23, 2025

Due: December 4, 2025

City Contacts:

Mike Kornmann, Director of Community and Economic Development / Zoning
Administrator

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(920) 623-5900 Ext. 1106



Introduction

Purpose of RFQ and Objectives

The City of Columbus is seeking Statements of Qualifications from interested developers and/or builders to construct a residential project. The property comprises two vacant parcels at the intersection of Tower Drive and Hamilton Street, totaling approximately 7.19 acres (5.91 acres and 1.28 acres). Originally acquired as a potential fire station site, a feasibility study by Bray and Associates determined the location did not meet operational requirements for that use. The city is now pursuing residential development and seeks a qualified partner to deliver high-quality housing aligned with Columbus's growth and community development objectives.

Objectives for the project include:

- Multifamily residential development consistent with surrounding residential uses.
- Partnering with a developer and/or builder to plan and construct project.
- Intention to evaluate proposals from interested entities and enter negotiations with the selected developer to craft a project, identify city participation in it, and transfer the property for its construction.

The city is committed to working with a developer and/or builder to develop the site and recognizes the latitude needed to address economic realities of the project. Accordingly, the City is committed to logical solutions, which may include sale of the property and TIF funding as necessary to serve the project. The subject properties are situated within Tax Increment District (TID) No. 7. The city will evaluate requests for Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance on a case-by-case basis. Any TIF assistance will be structured on a pay-as-you-go basis and must include documentation supporting financial needs. Zoning map amendments will be reviewed and processed in accordance with all applicable code requirements. The city is agreeable to complete necessary zoning actions after execution of an approved Developer's Agreement.

The city already has taken several proactive steps in advancing this project. These include the creation of a concept, seeking public support, conducting an inventory of the property, and establishing a streamlined and straightforward review, permitting, and approval process aligned with community and site-specific goals. Overall, Columbus's size provides nimbleness that can be advantageous throughout the development review process.

In turn, it is expected that the developer will commit to a reasonable implementation schedule, a development plan that maintains much of the intended feel and quality of surrounding neighborhoods, and a fair return on investment. The mutual commitment of both the City and developer will be solidified in a Development Agreement between the parties. Elements of the agreement could include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ▪ Private Financing Commitments | ▪ Development Standards |
| ▪ City Assistance Commitments | ▪ Site Conditions |



* Project Location



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- Approval Milestones
- Construction Milestones
- Cost Responsibilities
- Pre-Closing Obligations for Property Conveyance
- Flexibilities/Zoning
- Responsibilities of the City
- Responsibilities of the Developer/s
- Others, as negotiated

Property Information

- The southern portion of the property is constrained by floodplain and floodway conditions; however, approximately four acres of unconstrained, developable land remain suitable for new residential construction.
- A wetland delineation has not yet been completed, though a preliminary site inventory has been conducted. Stormwater management must be addressed as part of the site design.
- Existing City utilities are available along Tower Drive, providing ready access to water and sewer infrastructure to support the development.
- The property is adjacent to single-family residential neighborhoods and a nursing home to the west with easy access to US 151.
- The property has historically been used for agricultural purposes and served as the location for the Community Garden. The selected developer will be expected to coordinate with the city to relocate the garden as part of the project.

Development Vision and Design Guidelines

The City Council supports the included concept plan for the site and encourages proposals that are consistent with its intent while allowing flexibility for innovative, compatible approaches.

Key design elements include:

- Primary access from Tower Drive, limited to no more than two access points.
- A two-story apartment building designed for older residents.
- Approximately eight twin homes or zero lot line single-family attached units, with an emphasis on homeownership opportunities.
- Construction of an on-site pedestrian path connecting to the existing sidewalk network.
- The proposed development should exemplify quality in both site and building design, incorporating high-quality, durable materials that enhance and contribute positively to the community's built environment.

Potential Funding Sources

Funding sources potentially available to assist with the cost of redevelopment included:

- WEDC [Community Development Investment Grant](#)
- WHEDA [Infrastructure Access Loan Program](#)
- [Tax Increment Financing](#) (TIF) TID No. 7



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Background

City of Columbus

Located less than 30 miles from Madison, Columbus, Wisconsin is a thriving small town in Columbia County, offering an ideal balance of small-town charm and convenient regional access. With a population of approximately 5,400 residents, Columbus serves as a family-friendly community and an increasingly attractive residential hub in south-central Wisconsin.

- **Transportation:** Columbus benefits from excellent transportation connectivity, situated along five major highway corridors, Highways 151, 73, 89, 16, and 60. It's served by daily Amtrak passenger rail and Lamers Connect bus routes linking to Madison, the Fox Valley, and surrounding communities. This multimodal access makes Columbus an appealing location for both commuters and local professionals seeking proximity to employment centers while enjoying the advantages of a smaller community.
- **Social and Recreation Amenities:** Recreation and quality of life are central to the Columbus experience. The Crawfish River offers opportunities for kayaking, fishing, and nature exploration, while the City's two golf courses, Aquatic Center, and network of community parks provide residents with abundant ways to stay active and engaged. Year-round events such as Redbud Day, the Holiday Train, and the Independence Day Celebration. A historic downtown offering shopping, dining, and entertainment, all contribute to a strong sense of community pride and connection.
- **Schools:** The Columbus School District operates three public schools and one charter school and enrolls over 1,145 students. Additionally, there also are multiple private school options.
- **Job Market:** The Columbus Planning Area is home to several large employers, including American Packaging Corporation, ENERPAC, Prairie Ridge Hospital, Lyco Manufacturing Inc., Rodes Bake-N-Serv, and Columbus High School. Within the City of Columbus itself, there are 2,567 jobs, with manufacturing being the largest industry, making up the largest share of employment. Additionally, the city offers excellent accessibility to major employment markets in the Madison and Fox Valley areas, providing opportunities for hybrid office and remote workers, as well as commuters.
- **Healthcare:** The primary healthcare provider is Prairie Ridge Health, a full-service regional hospital and clinic system employing more than 300 healthcare professionals and over 150 medical staff. The hospital provides 24/7 emergency care, inpatient and outpatient services, surgery, obstetrics, rehabilitation, imaging, and mental health care, supported by additional clinics in Beaver Dam, Marshall, and Sun Prairie. Prairie Ridge Health serves approximately 27,000 residents across the greater Columbus area. Residents have access to comprehensive, high-quality healthcare within their community.
- **Housing Market Overview:** Columbus offers a diverse housing stock with a wider variety of housing types compared to both Columbia County and the State of Wisconsin. The city features a higher proportion of duplexes and multi-unit structures, providing options that appeal to a broad range of residents, from first-time homebuyers to retirees. The median home sold price reached \$295,500. Between 2022 and 2023, the median property value rose from \$209,500 to \$225,700, a 7.7% increase, underscoring steady growth in the local housing market. As of September 2025, the median listing home price in Columbus was \$372,400, reflecting a 6.4% year-over-year increase. Columbus maintains a homeownership rate of 66.7%, slightly above the national average of 65%, signaling both stability and strong demand within the community.



Relevant Reports and Ordinances

[City of Columbus 2040 Comprehensive Plan](#)

- The project area is designated as Multifamily Residential on the Future Land Use Map.
- The Multifamily Residential land use classification is intended to accommodate areas where their properties with 3 or more dwelling units will be located. Areas designated for residential structures meant to be occupied by more than one dwelling unit.
- A residential project on the site would help the city accomplish its goals of providing a variety of housing types to meet the needs and encourage future growth within the City of Columbus. Support the objective of creating mixed neighborhoods that provide a range of housing types, densities and costs.

[Zoning Ordinance](#)

- The property is zoned Multi-Family Residential and compatible with the Future Land Use designation. The R-4 district provides for the conversion of single-family structures to two-family and multifamily uses in the established portions of the city where larger two-story homes predominate and provides for new areas of modern, multifamily developments, including condominiums.
- Columbus's zoning code accommodates both twin homes and duplexes, and a multi-family district that can accommodate larger apartment or townhome-type developments.
- Planned Unit Development (PUD) rezoning is also an option to provide flexibility as may be needed for the proposed development concept.
- The city is currently rewriting the City of Columbus Zoning Code which has an anticipated adoption date in late 2026. The Zoning Code rewrite will result in adoption of a new zoning map, new zoning districts, and zoning regulations.

[Subdivision Ordinance](#)

- Chapter 90 - Subdivisions provides requirements and processes for dividing land, developing parcels, and laying out subdivisions in the city.
- The chapter describes required public improvements, how they are approved, and how they are constructed.



City of Columbus Property at Tower Drive

This map is not a survey of the actual boundary of any property this map depicts.



105 N Dickason Blvd
Columbus, WI 53925
920-623-5900

Print Date: 7/9/2025

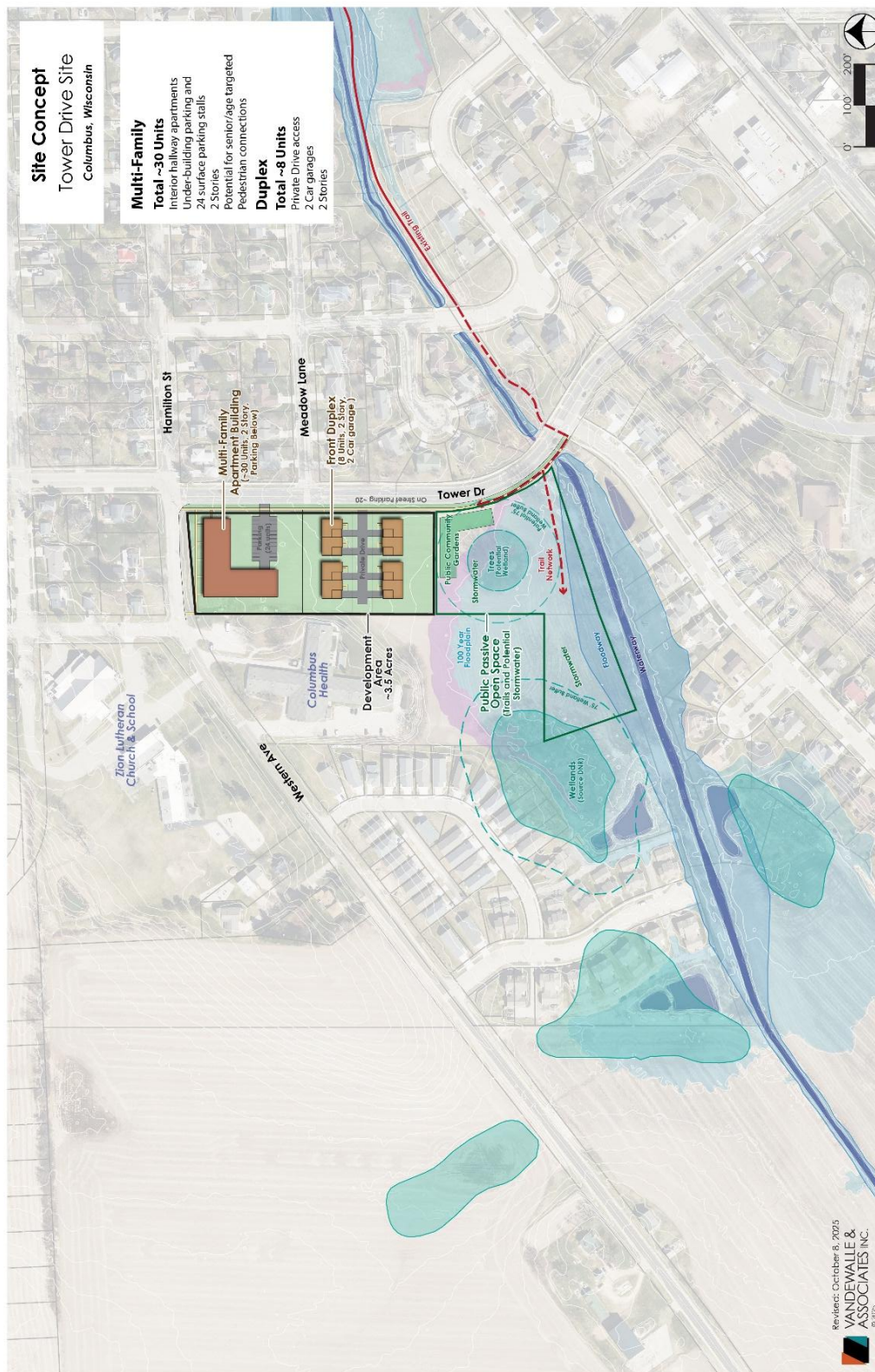


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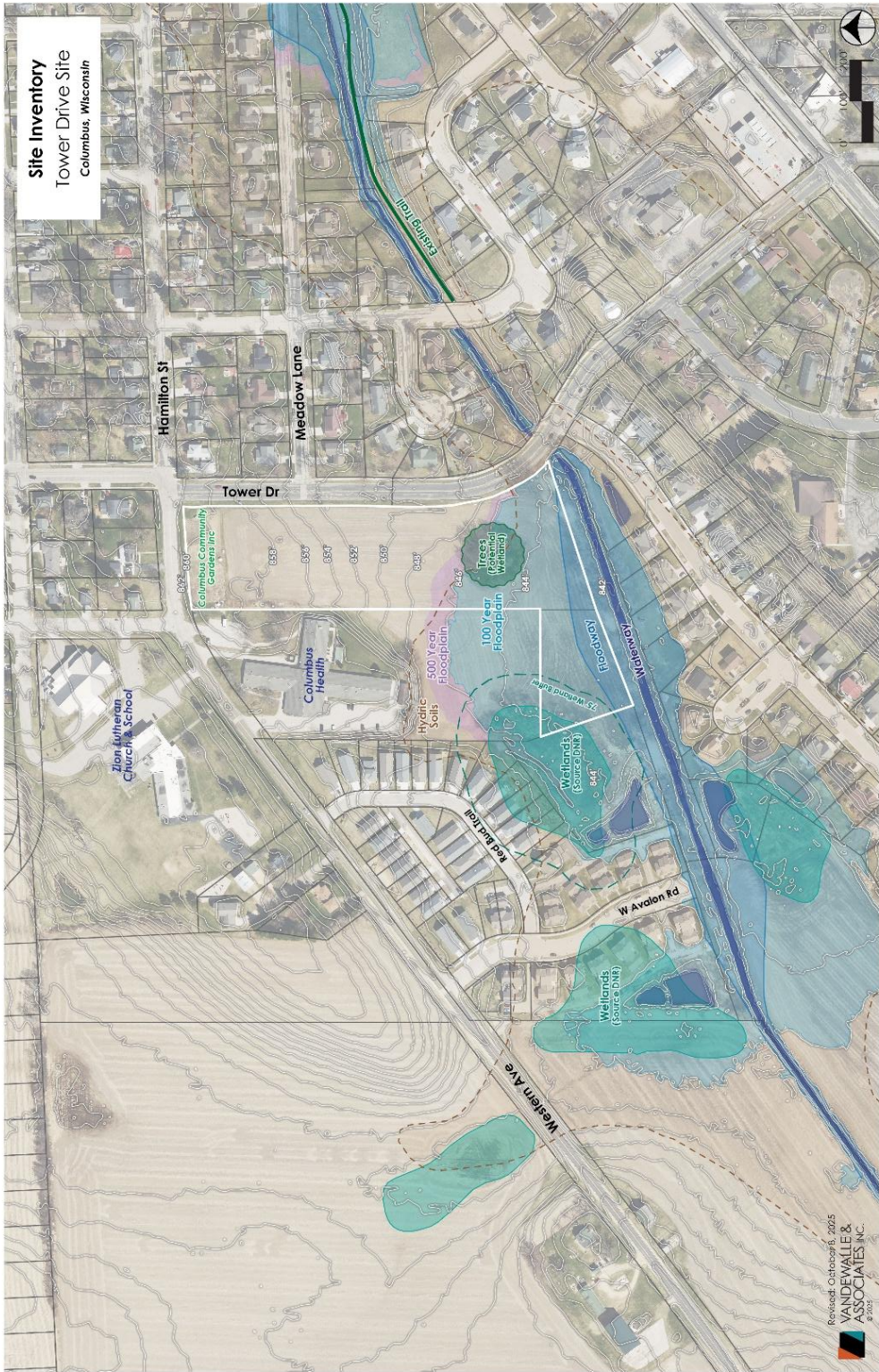
Utilities Map



Concept Plan



Site Inventory Map



Housing Vision Board

Photo Examples
Residential Concepts
Columbus, Wisconsin



Revised: April 22, 2025
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Submittal of Interest Requirements

Submittal Contents

Interested parties should submit the following information with a maximum of 10 pages not including section dividers (if provided) and appendices. Weblinks in lieu of appendices are acceptable and encouraged. Information should be provided in the order shown below.

Cover: Include project name, respondent name, and date (1 page).

Section 1 Cover Letter: Introductory cover letter identifying the lead entity, contact information for the proposed project manager, and a statement that the respondent has reviewed this RFQ including a list of all specific addendums that the City may subsequently issue (1 page max).

Section 2 Development Team Organization: Overview of the development team organization indicating the lead entity and lead individual for each component of the work (1 page max). Include resumes for the key project team members (1 page max per individual) in an appendix.

Section 3 Summary of Experience: Feature the development team's skills and relevant experience applicable to this site. Include brief descriptions of at least three specific projects and list municipal references for each (3 pages max). More detailed project descriptions may be provided in an appendix.

Section 4 Financial Relationships: Provide contact information for banking and other financial entities that have participated in past projects (1 page max).

Section 5 General Project Approach Summary: Include a brief narrative summary (3 pages max) expressing your team's:

- Project understanding and interest
- Project approach and potential development ideas or concepts you have for the site (note that drawings and project details are not required but can be attached as an appendix if desired)
- Approach to working with the City to craft and execute a development plan
- Tentative project schedule
- Purchase Price. Provide an Offer to Purchase based upon the development of the proposal, as well as any contingencies that would be related to the purchase.

Format, Transmittal, and Questions

The entire submittal including all appendices must be provided in a single PDF file and delivered to the City **no later than 4:00 pm, December 4, 2025**. Transmit the file, or a link to it, electronically to the following address. Please use the subject line "Tower Drive RFQ Submittal."

Mike Kornmann, Director of Community and Economic Development

MKornmann@columbuswi.gov

Questions about the contents of this RFQ can be submitted via email to the above address or by phone to (920) 623-5900 Ext. 1106 by 4:00 pm, November 13, 2025. All questions will be recorded and responses posted to the Project [webpage](#) by November 19, 2025. Questions and inquiries submitted after November 19, 2025, will not be answered.



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Evaluation of Statements of Qualifications

The City has a Development Review Team consisting of the City Administrator, Community Development Director, City Engineer, Utilities Director, City Attorney and Mayor to evaluate all submittals, conduct interviews, and recommend a preferred developer to the full City Council.

The city will use a “Qualifications Based Selection Process” to review and rank the written proposals based on the following:

- The completeness of the submittal and its consistency with the requirements contained in this RFQ;
- The qualifications and experience of the development team with projects similar in scope to that proposed;
- The development team’s financial strength and ability to secure financing for the project;
- The consistency of the proposed concepts and timeframes with the City’s goal and objectives as described in this RFQ; and
- The proposed approach to working with the city as a partner to craft and execute a final project concept.

Based on the above, the Project Team will invite no more than three of the top-ranked development teams for an interview. The interviewed teams will then be evaluated using the criteria listed above in addition to any other information requested at the time of the interview.

Project Schedule

The following contains a tentative schedule the City intends to follow in selecting qualified developers, soliciting proposals from them, and negotiating terms with them. The City reserves the right to alter this schedule at any time, with or without prior notice, and will post any changes on its website.

Task	Timing
RFQ Issued	October 23, 2025
Questions on RFQ Due	November 13, 2025
Answers to Question/Addendum to RFQ	November 19, 2025
RFQ Response Deadline	December 4, 2025
Interviews Scheduled with Respondents	December 8, 2025
Interviews with Respondents	Week of December 15, 2025
City Council Evaluation and Selection of Development Entity	January 6, 2026
Negotiate Development Agreement	January-February 2026
Developer Seeks Project Entitlements	January-February 2026
Platting and Permitting Begins	January-February 2026
Construction Begins	Summer of 2026



Disclaimers

Project Webpage: The City has created a Tower Drive RFQ section on its Economic Development [webpage](#) where it will post all information related to this project. Respondents are advised to check the page regularly for any updates.

Property Conditions: The descriptions of the conditions of the property contained herein are generalized depictions. The City does not represent or warrant the accuracy of any of the information, and no party should rely on such information.

Insurance Requirements: To the extent that the developer wishes to do onsite investigation and/or testing of the site, the developer would be asked to pay attention to the insurance requirements of the city. A Certificate of Insurance with supporting Endorsement shall be submitted with the signed contract with limits acceptable to the city and which identifies the city as an Additional Insured for comprehensive general liability purposes via Policy Endorsement on a primary and non-contributory basis.

All Costs on Respondent: Respondents shall be responsible for any and all costs they incur in responding to this RFQ.

Submittals Subject to Open Records: All responses to this RFQ shall become property of the City of Columbus and are subject to the Open Records laws of the State of Wisconsin. Any information a respondent deems to be proprietary, or trade secrets should be specifically identified as such, but the City cannot guarantee that such information will remain confidential if required to be disclosed under Wisconsin law.

Schedule Subject to Change: The City will use good faith efforts to adhere to the schedule described herein but reserves the right to modify the schedule at any time and without prior notice where it is in its best interest to do so. Any changes will be posted to the project [webpage](#).

Right Reject All: The City of Columbus reserves the right to cancel any contract for failure of the successful firm to comply with the terms, conditions, and specifications of this request and/or contract. The City of Columbus reserves the right to award this request to the responsible, responsive firm whose proposal is overall most advantageous to the City and can meet the requirements of this request.

Links

Project Webpage: <https://www.cityofcolumbuswi.com/2566/Housing-Project-at-Tower-Drive>

City of Columbus Comprehensive Plan: <https://www.cityofcolumbuswi.com/2284/Planning-Zoning>

Columbus Zoning Code:

https://library.municode.com/wi/columbus/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=MUCO_CH114ZO

Columbus Subdivision Code:

https://library.municode.com/wi/columbus/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=MUCO_CH90SU



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