

Watertown Department of Public Health

To: Watertown Finance Committee

From: Carol Quest

Date: January 20, 2025

Subject: Parcel: 291-0815-0424-040/510 S Second Street

Background

The Health Department currently operates several outreach programs that provide critical health services to our community. However, the existing facilities and spaces are becoming increasingly limited in their ability to meet the demand for these services. An additional lot and building would provide the necessary room to expand these programs, ensuring their success and accessibility. Specifically, the new lot and building would allow for:

- **Car Seat Checks:** Space for trained professionals to educate parents and caregivers on the correct installation and use of car seats, helping ensure child passenger safety.
- **Drive-through Immunization Clinics:** A safe, efficient environment for residents to receive immunizations without the need to leave their vehicles, especially beneficial for those with mobility challenges or time constraints.
- **Other Health Department Programs:** Additional space would allow for the seamless operation of and storage for various health programs as space becomes limited in our current building.

Benefits to the Community:

The allocation of a new lot and building for Health Department use will provide numerous benefits to the community, including:

- **Increased Access to Health Services:** More space will allow for greater participation in vital health programs, especially for those who may otherwise face barriers to access.
- **Improved Public Health Outcomes:** By offering easier access to services like immunizations and child safety education, the community will see improved overall health and safety.

- **Enhanced Community Engagement:** The expanded capacity will support the Health Department's goal of reaching more residents and meeting their health needs in a timely and efficient manner.

The need for additional space to support the Health Department's critical programs has become urgent. The proposed lot and building would significantly enhance our ability to serve the community and contribute to the health and well-being of our residents. The Health Department has started a discussion with the Mayor, City Attorney, Public Works- Zoning, and Public Works- Engineering to look at the feasibility, code requirements, and program requirements.

Budget Goal

4. Fosters community growth by assessing opportunities, stakeholder input, environmental needs, and modern code and policy priorities
5. Maintains a safe and healthy community, with an eye toward future needs and trends

Financial Impact

The Health Department would be utilizing ARPA funding to purchase the land parcel, make required changes/updates to meet City of Watertown codes and construct a new building to meet Health Department program and service needs.

Plan Commission Role

Pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 62.23(5) the acquisition of land for public grounds must be referred to the Plan Commission for a recommendation. The Plan Commission role is to review the proposed acquisition and make a recommendation to the Common Council as to whether the purchase of the real estate is in the interest of the City and its future plans. If the Plan Commission fails to make a recommendation within 30 days the Common Council may proceed without the input from the Plan Commission.

Recommendation

I am asking the Plan Commission to recommend the Health Department's request to purchase an additional lot and proceed with the construction of a new building to accommodate vital public health programs, including car seat checks, drive-through immunization clinics, and other community health initiatives. The new lot and building will enhance accessibility and capacity to meet the growing health service needs of our community.