Attachment A

info@The-Upper-Room.org
(712) 310 - 8572

UPPER ROOM

March 11, 2025

City of Council Bluffs
Attn: City Council
209 Pearl Street
Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503

RE: Planned Residential Development Request Plan
- Reclassification of Single-Family Home to Boarding, Rooming, and Lodging House
- The Upper Room, 1003 High Street, Council Bluffs, Iowa

Honorable City Council Members,

We are writing to express our interest in reclassifying 1003 High Street from a single-family home to a boarding, rooming, and lodging house for The Upper Room, a non-profit organization.

Our Story

Founded in Arvada, Colorado in 1982, Shannon's Hope was created to provide a refuge for homeless pregnant women and become a voice for the unborn. Shannon's Hope has evolved to home, currently serving women and children coming out of crisis, which encompasses domestic violence, sexual exploitation, homelessness, and addictions. We are not a shelter but operate as a group home model offering a long-term program that allows women to find safety and begin a new life of healing and resiliency. Shannon's Hope has existed for 45 years, empowering approximately 2,250 families, and that number continues to grow. The Upper Room is the expansion into Council Bluffs and will be offering the same program.

Colorado to Council Bluffs

Beginning in 2017, Gabrielle (Gabby) Dowdy, began serving the Denver-area communities by working with Shannon's Hope and assisting with their anti-trafficking efforts. Gabby learned that one-third of the women in communities throughout the country are victims of domestic violence, one third are substance abusers, and the other third are homeless. Building upon the work being done in Colorado, Gabby's passion to serve women coming out of crisis brought her to Council Bluffs in 2024 when the concept of The Upper Room was born.

Who We Are / What To Know

The Upper Room is a branch of Shannon's Hope in Colorado - a home for women and children coming out of crisis, which encompasses domestic violence, sexual exploitation, homelessness, and addictions. Serving as a group home, The Upper Room is not a shelter. We are a Christian home that teaches women parenting, life skills, healthy habits, and much-needed Bible studies.

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What to Know / Services Offered

Our program is a six-month to two-year program. We offer a sober, faith-based and therapeutic environment for women and children. The program consists of setting and accomplishing short-term and long-term goals, life skills, health and safety plans, and mentorship. The goal for The Upper Room is to break generational dependencies to enable a brighter future for their children. Our mentorship provides them with the opportunity to grow into a healthy, more cohesive family in which they can succeed. The independence they gained will allow them to reenter the community as a stronger member of society.

Hours of Operation

Operating hours are twenty-four hours a day, three hundred and sixty-five days a year. We will have two staff members on site daily, and one will be our overnight staff. Adhering to the five people in the house who can stay overnight, we will have four clients, a combination of a single woman, or a woman with a child, to make the four clients. The fifth person will be the staff member who stays at the house with the clients.

Collaboration / Partnerships

In this program, we meet our clients where they are, and they will receive an individualized program to meet their specific needs in mental health support, addiction recovery, and medical support from local health providers and Heartland Family Services. We will also provide a four-level program where the clients complete weekly tasks, find a job to further their independence, and leave our program ready to live independently.

Financial Sustainability

The Upper Room is privately funded through donations to its nonprofit organization and contributions through Shannon's Hope. To stay enrolled in the program, our clients must pay their program fee, meet with staff weekly for program accountability, fulfill program requirements, remain sober and clean, and complete all mental, substance, and medical support conditions. We also have consequences for clients if they do not satisfy the program requirements.

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Need

We believe that opening this group home will offer the Council Bluffs community many opportunities to better the lives of its clients and aid those suffering from domestic violence, sexual exploitation, homelessness, and addictions. We also hope to encourage our clients to give back to the community, for example, volunteering at churches, within the neighborhood in which we live, and with other non-profit organizations.

Reclassification Request

The Upper Room is submitting this Letter of Intent for the Planned Residential Development Plan to reclassify the home from a single-family home to a boarding, rooming, and lodging house. **Currently, the City of Council Bluffs requires the lot to be 7,500 square feet for the house to be classified as a boarding, rooming, and lodging house. Unfortunately, the current single-family residential lot size at 1003 High Street is 7,480 square feet - only 20 square feet short of the required square footage needed to be reclassified.** Based on this lot's size, we kindly request you consider this reclassification request.

Please know that we understand that living in a close-knit community such as Council Bluffs requires us to continue building strong connections with our neighbors to create a safer and more pleasant living environment and help foster a sense of belonging. We want to be good neighbors, cultivate a strong community bond with those we live and work with, and expand our community partnerships.

Contact

We believe that God can turn beginnings into purpose and want to offer new beginnings to the women in the Council Bluffs community. Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please contact The Upper Room Director Gabrielle (Gabby) Dowdy at 303-949-1158 or at gabbyd@the-upper-room.org. We look forward to discussing this opportunity with you further.

Blessings,

Gabby Dowdy

Shannon's Hope and The Upper Room

Landscape Plan

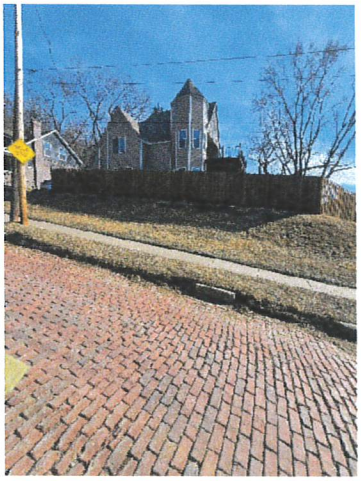
The Upper Room is excited to utilize the property at 1003 High St. This unique house has undergone significant renovations. It offers a sound structure that can become a Boarding, Rooming, and Lodging house. In the before and after photos, you can see significant changes. These changes also include a six-foot privacy fence that will afford our clients and neighbors fewer disruptions in our yards. The fenced area will also provide a protected area for the moms and children to play outside safely.

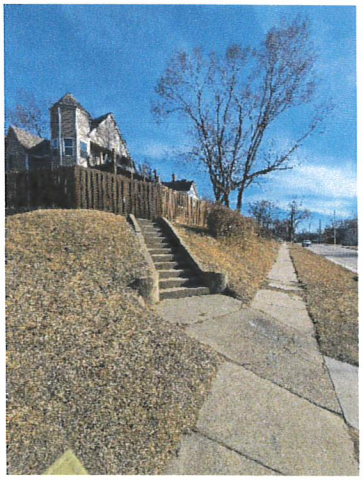
We plan to create a backyard gardening space for our clients to grow their food. We will also bring in a raised garden therapist to offer our clients therapy through gardening. This lot is therapeutic and an oasis for our clients to restructure and regain their lives.

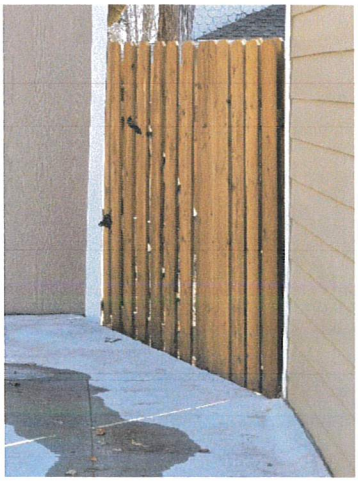
The yard is pristine, and we plan to keep it that way. To maintain curb appeal, we will add more shrubs to the fence line facing 8th St. and add flowers to appeal to the neighborhood.

In the following pictures, you will see the fence around the yard.









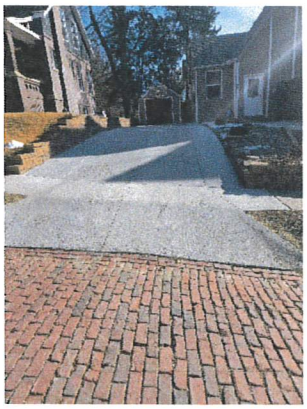
The last picture shows the backyard where we will put our raised garden.



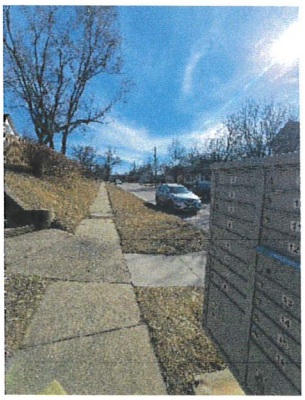
Parking Plan

The zoning and Codes require us to have one half of a parking space per living quarter/bedroom and a parking pad nine feet wide by fourteen feet deep. Our current driveway is sixteen feet wide and sixty-four feet deep. We can fit four cars in the driveway at any time. Most clients that come to us do not have a car. If they do have a car, they may park in the driveway. There is off-street parking on High Street for our short-term guests to use.

Typically, our guests consist of Case Workers, Volunteers, and other Service Providers. We plan to have only one staff member car at the house.



Driveway



Off street parking - High Street

OUR HISTORY

After 42 years of operating a safe house in Colorado, Shannon's Hope has decided to branch out into other states. The Upper Room is a safe home branch of Shannon's Hope serving Council Bluffs, Iowa, and the surrounding areas. The home will offer sober living, program work, and partnership with the community to provide safety, mental health resources, parenting support, and more. We strive to support women with or without children to reach their full potential and reenter society after experiencing crisis and trauma. The Upper Room will offer life skill classes, parenting classes, trauma-based classes, and group therapy in a family-style living opportunity.

CONTACT US

info@the-upper-room.org

www.the-upper-room.org

712-310-0572

Guided by Faith,
Driven by Compassion



ABOUT US

The Upper Roon is a crisis center for women and children coming out of crisis, domestic violence, exploitation, homelessness, and addictions. We strive to offer a haven for individuals to find mental health resources, life skill training, support, mentorship, and care through difficult times to find healing and help as they gain independence.

The Upper Room

UPPER ROOM

I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you.
2 Kings 20:5

OUR MISSION

The Upper Room exists as a Christ-centered sober living refuge for single women, pregnant mothers, and mothers with children who are experiencing homelessness, battling addictions, domestic violence, and exploitation.

OUR SERVICES

- Life Planning
- Mentorship
- Resource Navigation
- Care and Support
- Life Skill Classes
- Job Readiness
- Prenatal Care
- Parenting Classes
- Community Resources
- Recovery Care



- UR Welcome
- UR Seen
- UR Cherished
- UR Loved
- UR Safe
- UR Home

Now Serving Council Bluffs, Iowa



Use of the House

The Upper Room plans to use the house in a community living arrangement. According to the Fire Marshall, we can house five people.

Kitchen: The kitchen will be a space for all our clients and staff to prepare meals.

First Level Bathroom: Community bathroom.

Dining Room: The dining room will host community meals, individual meals, group classes, and community meetings.

Office: Staff office and confidential one-on-one meetings.

Living Room: This is a shared area for relaxation and group meetings.

Foyer and Entry Closet: The foyer will house our communication boards and schedules. The Entry Closet contains strollers, car seats, and baby swings.

First Level Deck/Porch: Shared community area.

Second Level Deck/Porch: Staff Deck.

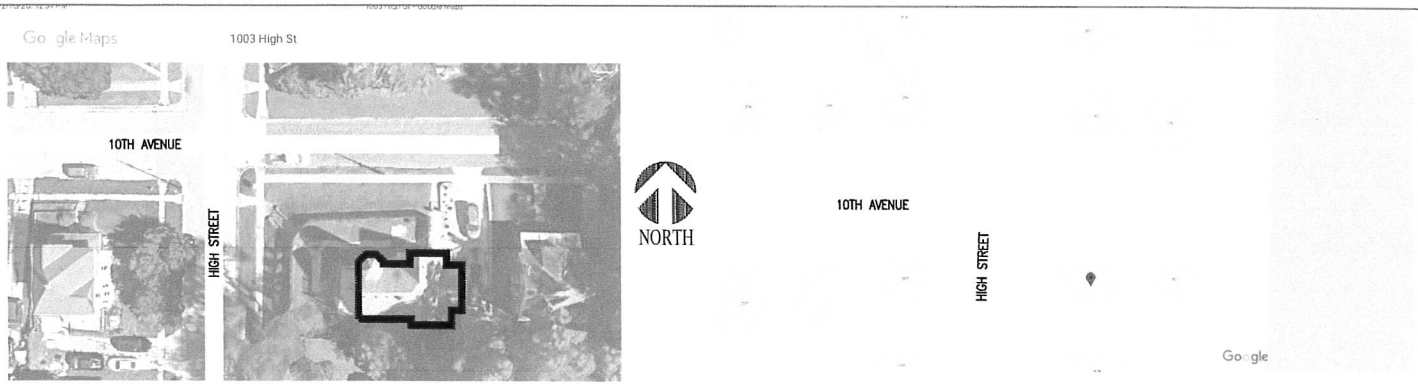
Bedroom Connected to the Upper Deck: This bedroom is the largest. We plan to convert the one room to two rooms. Converting the bedroom to two rooms will give us one small bedroom with access to the upper deck. The small bedroom will be the staff bedroom where one staff member can sleep. The second bedroom will be able to house one or two single women.

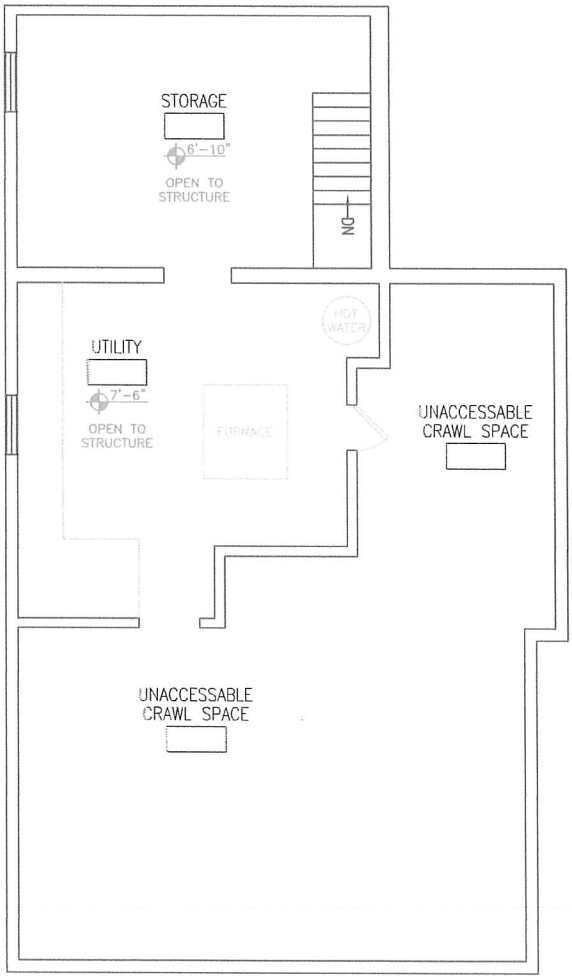
Bedroom Facing 8th St.: One mom and one child or two single women will stay in this room.

Bedroom Facing the Backyard: This room will accommodate one mom and one child or one single woman.

Second Level Bathroom: Community bathroom.

Basement: Storage.





NORTH

BASEMENT LEVEL

1/8" = 1'-0"

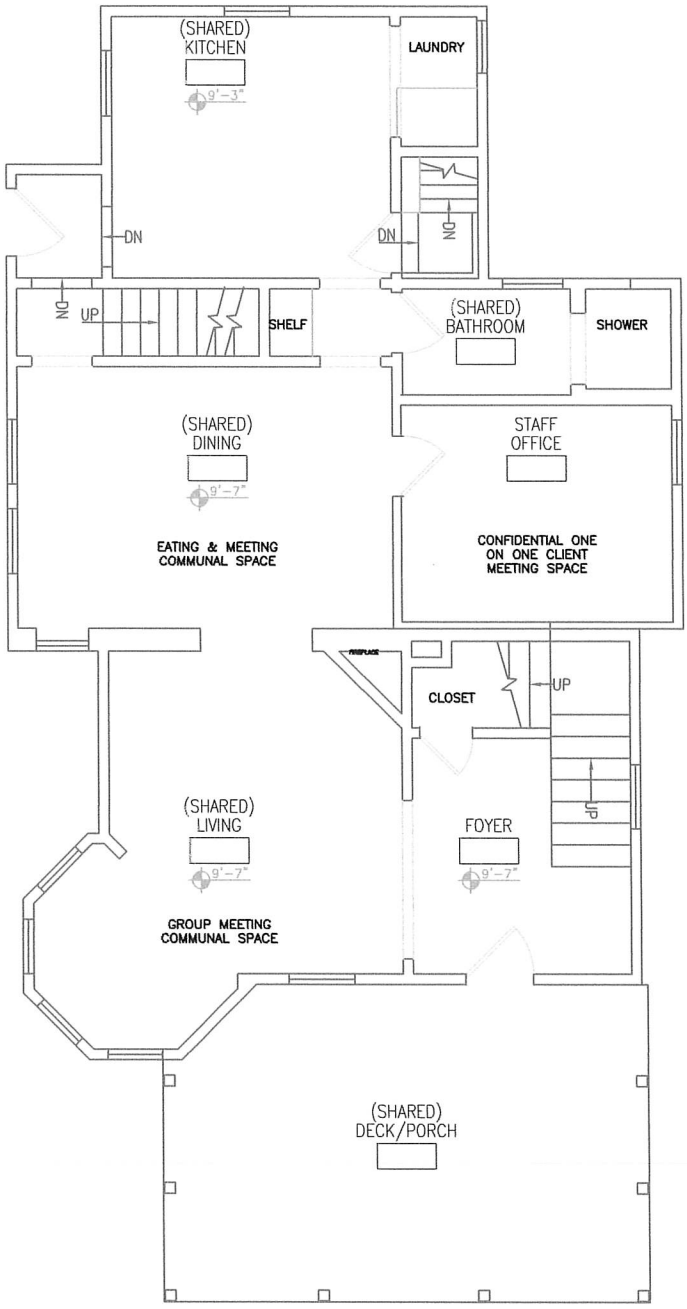
390 SQFT

1003 HIGH STREET
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA, 51503

0 5 10 15 21 FEET

A-2.0

5 TOTAL OCCUPANTS
1 STAFF MEMBER
4 CLIENTS



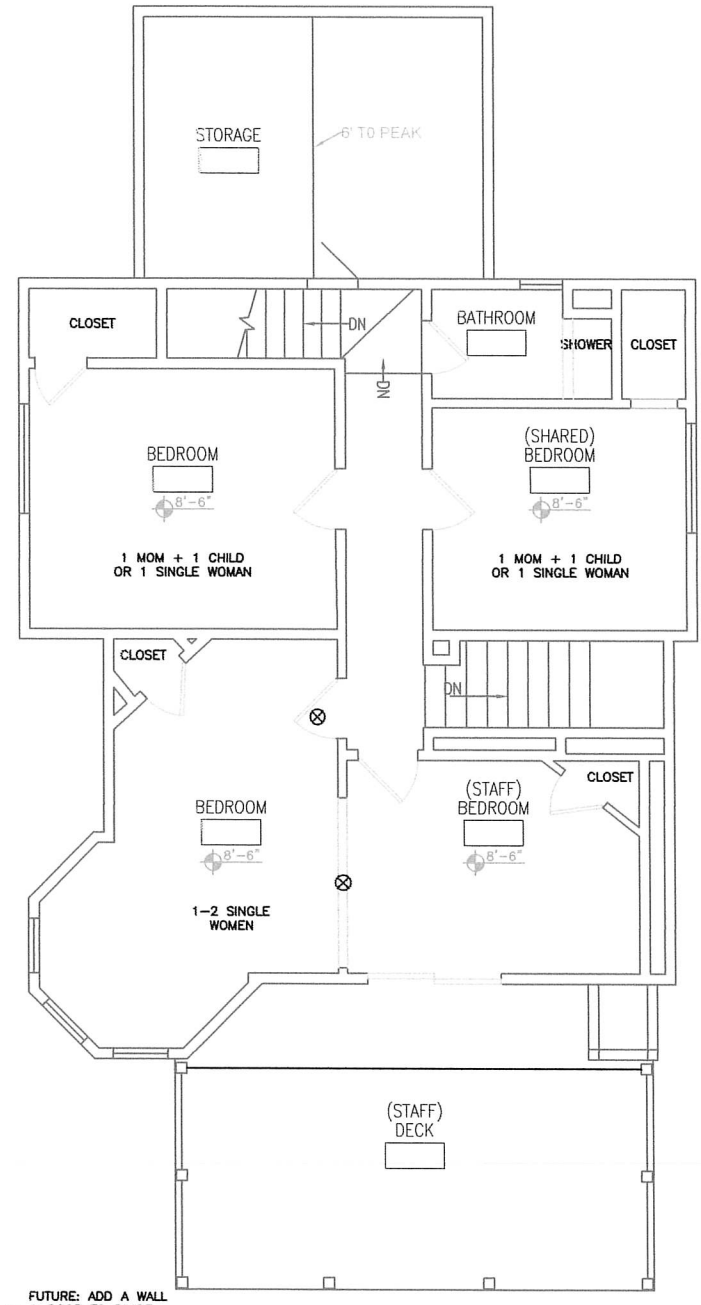
1,046 SQFT

1ST LEVEL
1/8" = 1'-0"
NORTH

1003 HIGH STREET
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA, 51503

0 5 10 15 21 FEET

A-2.1



⊗ FUTURE: ADD A WALL & DOOR TO DIVIDE THIS ROOM INTO 2 SEPARATE SPACES.

1,034 SQFT

2ND LEVEL

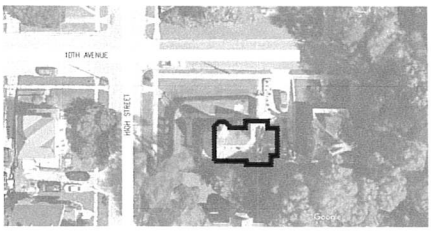
1/8" = 1'-0"

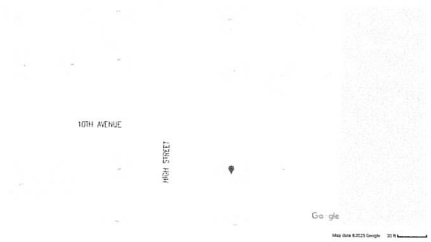
NORTH

1003 HIGH STREET
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA, 51503

0 5 10 15 21 FEET

A-2.2







UPPER ROOM

1003 HIGH STREET

COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA, 51503

PROJECT NUMBER

DATE: 02.15.2025

DRAWN BY: JMD

CHECKED BY: ___

ISSUE

02.15.2025 XXXX

REVISIONS

XXXX

A-2.4

X OF X

DRAWING SIZE IS 24X36

2011:










1003 High St
998 High St
Council Bluffs, Iowa
Google Street View
Aug 2011 See more dates
Share

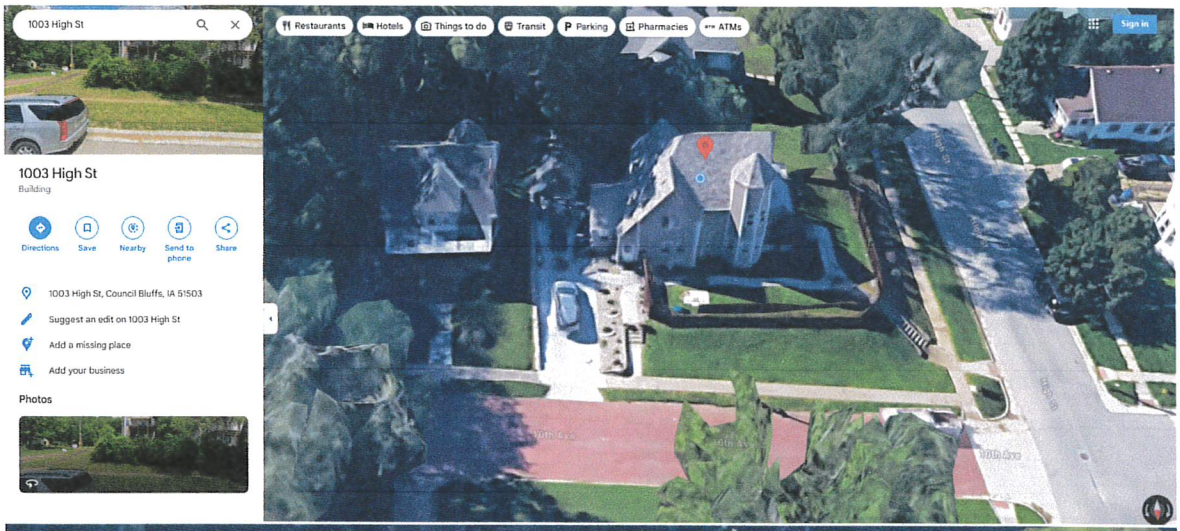
2021:








1003 High St
921 High St
Council Bluffs, Iowa
Google Street View
Jun 2021 See latest date
Share


1003 High St
1003 High St
Building
Directions
Save
Nearby
Send to phone
Share
1003 High St, Council Bluffs, IA 51503
Suggest an edit on 1003 High St
Add a missing place
Add your business
Photos
Restaurants
Hotels
Things to do
Transit
Parking
Pharmacies
ATMs
Sign in

