



# MEMORANDUM

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"...meeting community needs...enhancing quality of life."

TO: Community & Economic Development Committee (CEDC)

FROM: Matt Rehbein, Economic Development Specialist

DATE: January 22, 2020

RE: Planning Option Agreement for the Blue Ramp and Conway Hotel Sites – Merge, LLC

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The City of Appleton has received a Planning Option Agreement from Merge, LLC (attached) to provide Merge a 9-month period (March 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020) to conduct due diligence for a potential mixed-use development on the Blue Ramp and Conway Hotel sites. In return for this option, Merge would pay the City \$1,000. A map of the Blue Ramp site and Conway Hotel site is included with this memo.

Community and Economic Development Department Staff met with Merge on November 6, 2019 to discuss potential sites for development in the City of Appleton. While not actively marketed, these sites were of great interest to Merge due to their proximity to parking, location in an Opportunity Zone and a strong, vibrant downtown. The City received a Letter of Interest from Merge on November 29, 2019 (attached) expressing their interest in investigating these sites further. Given the cost to conduct the due diligence and prepare conceptual plans, Merge Urban Development Group would like exclusive right to conduct due diligence for this term and the assurance that the City would be interested in selling these parcels for a mixed-use development that is aligned with our Comprehensive Plan.

A listing of examples of other projects completed or underway by Merge is attached to this memo. Per Community and Economic Development Department Staff in Oshkosh, this group has met or exceeded their obligations on the Marion Road Redevelopment mixed-use project.

**Staff Recommendation:**

The Planning Option Agreement for the Blue Ramp and Conway Hotel sites from Merge, LLC  
**BE APPROVED.**