

CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT



Memorandum

To: City Plan Commission
From: Jonas U. Bruggemann, MSCRP | Senior Planner
Date: March 26, 2025 – **Amended March 27, 2025**
RE: 1381 Cranston Street – Assessors Plat 8, Lot 195, 1617, 2711
“**Cranston Print Works**” – Major Land Development Project: Preliminary Plan

I. Applicant | Property | Proposal

The Applicants and Owners are CPW True Storage LLC and CPW Apartments, LLC.

The subject property is located on Cranston Street and Dyer Avenue, identified as Assessor's Plat 8, Lot 195, 1617, 2711. The site borders the Cranston Print Works Pond which is part of the Pocasset River.

The property is zoned M-1 (Restricted industry) *with conditions* as approved in Ordinance No. 2023-6 (#1-23-04) and is not located in any municipal overlay district.

The Proposal is the complete interior and exterior renovation of the Cranston Print Works parcel into a mixed-use residential/commercial site with 100 residential units and 881 self-storage units making up 157,000+/- square feet. The combined existing parcels of land contain 1,834,045 +/- square feet (42.1+/- acres).

Residential uses are proposed in the existing Buildings A, B, and D (as labeled on the Site Plan) with the first floor of building D proposed as an amenity space exclusive to residents of the development. Self-storage is proposed on the first floor of the existing Building B, in the proposed Building E, and the eight proposed self-storage buildings (F1 – F8).

The Master Plan proposed multifamily for Building C, but due to structural deficiencies, the building is proposed to be razed and replaced with landscaping and a walkway for access between Building B and the parking lot at the southwestern corner of the property.

III. Documents Submitted for This Application

1. Major Land Development Plan entitled “**Cranston Print Works Site Redevelopment**” prepared by Allan & Major Associates, Inc.; dated January 23, 2025.
 - a. Photometric Plans, dated October 31, 2024
2. Architectural Plans, prepared by Brady Sullivan Properties; dated October 9, 2024
3. Major Land Development Project – Preliminary Plan Application & Checklist, signed by Project Manager Chris Lewis; dated February 3, 2025.
4. Preliminary Plan Filing Fee for \$8,000.00; dated February 3, 2025 (split into two checks, 1 from each applicant)
5. Sewer Plan Review – Letter of Findings by Veolia Water, dated October 31, 2024
6. Water Plan Review - Letter of Findings by Providence Water, dated December 4, 2024
7. RIDEM Freshwater Wetlands Permit, dated May 8, 2024
8. Compiled Drainage Report, prepared by Allan & Major Associates, Inc.; issued June 16, 2023; revised on October 16, 2023 and November 29, 2023; final stamp on January 21, 2025
9. Map 100' Abutters.
10. List of 100' Abutters.

11. Municipal Lean Certificate; dated January 3, 2025.
12. Notarized Affidavit of Notice of Compliance for Abutter Notices; signed by Applicant Legal Representative Robert D. Murray; dated January 17, 2025.

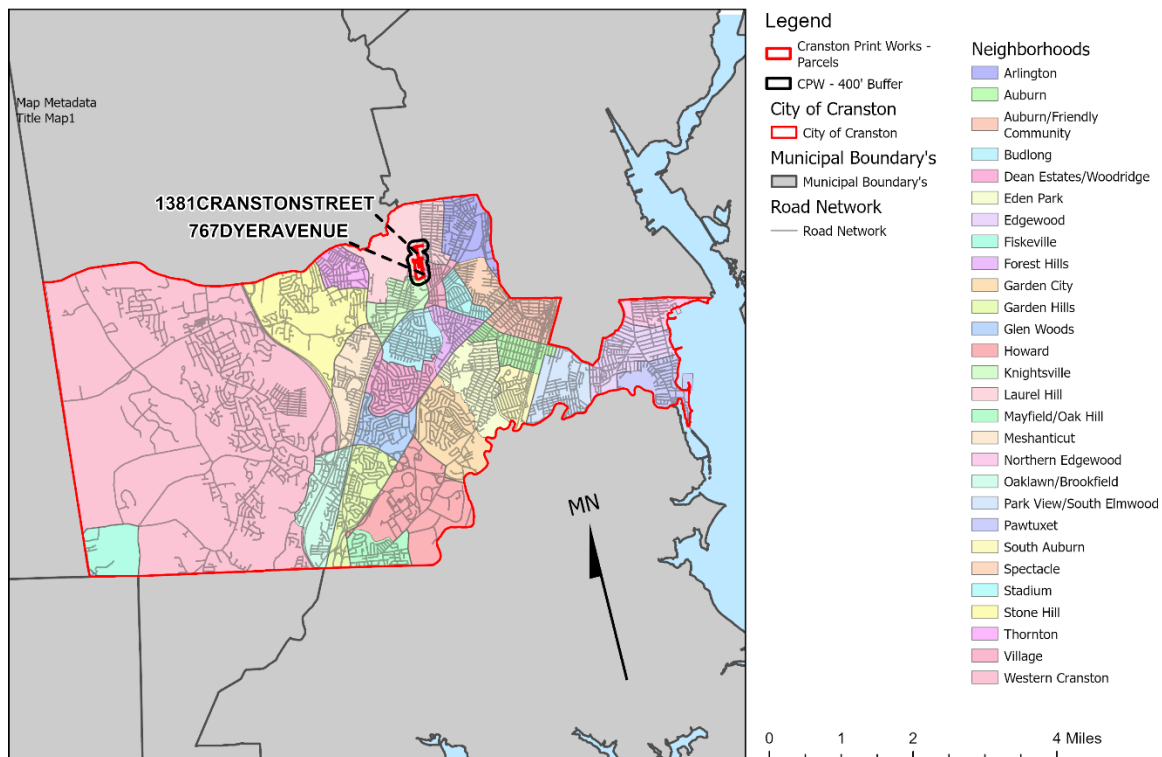
IV. Surrounding Land Use & Context

Analysis using the Cranston Geographic Information System, the FEMA Flood Map Service Center, and applicant supplied materials indicates that:

1. The subject parcel is in the Laurel Hill neighborhood of Cranston, situated at the intersection of Cranston Street and Dyer Avenue.
2. The surrounding neighborhood is a mix of B-1, B-2, C-2, C-5, M-1, and S-1 (Open Space).
3. The subject parcels elevations range from 82' in along the northeast side of the site to 50' along the southwest side of the site. There are steep slopes on the northeast, north and central areas of the site while the site is also moderately flat within the southern, northwest and north-northeast areas of the site.
4. The site is located adjacent to the Pocasset River along the western property line and is bounded by vertical stone and concrete retaining walls.
5. There is an isolated wetland flagged in the central portion of the site. The wetland and river edge were delineated by Applied Bio-Systems, Inc. on 4/15/2022 and field located by Allen & Major Associates, Inc.
6. The subject property is outside of any identified historic / cultural districts under jurisdiction of the Local Historic District Commission, State Historical Preservation Commission, State, or National Registers of Historic Places.
7. Significant portions of the proposed development are located within "Zone AE - 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard" and parts of the Building B is located in the Regulatory Floodway on FEMA Flood Map Panel 44007C0312H.

LOCATION

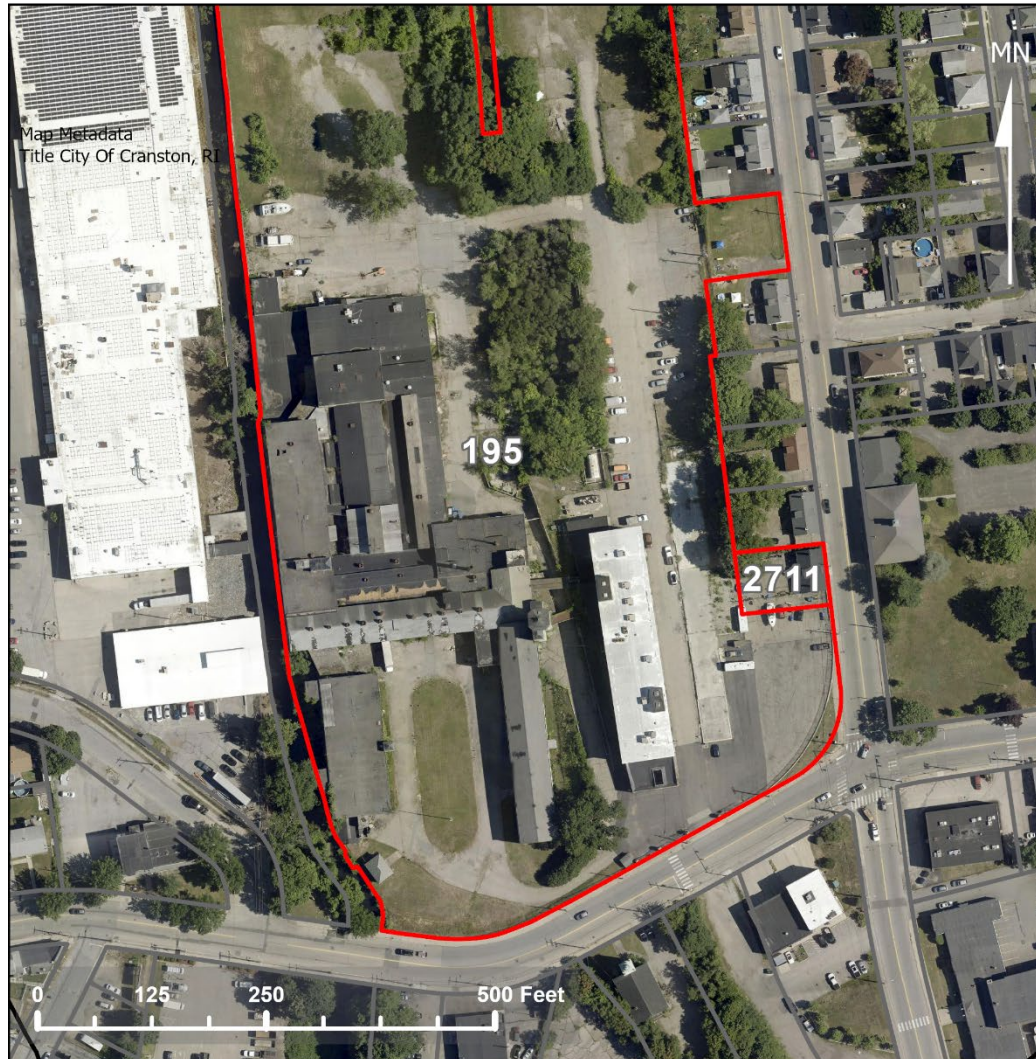
THIS MAP IS TO BE USED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY



1381 Cranston Street– "Cranston Print Works"

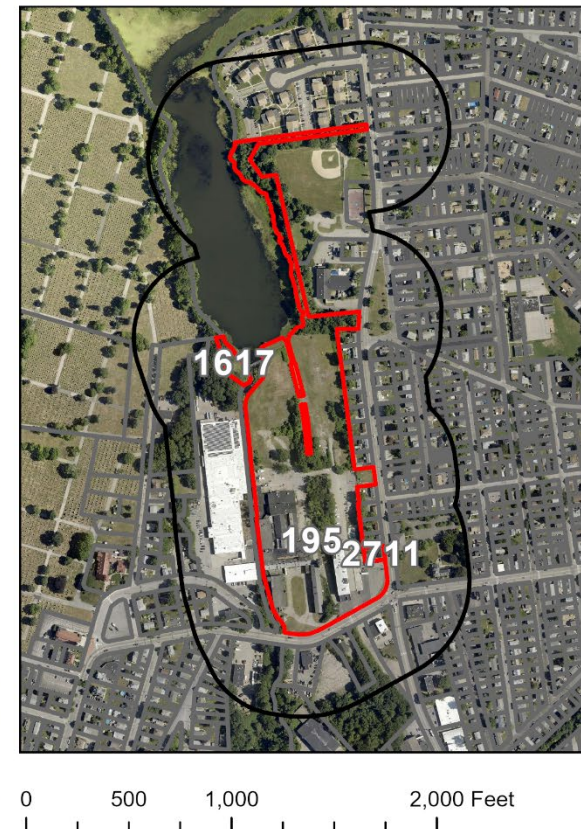
AERIAL VIEW

THIS MAP IS TO BE USED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY



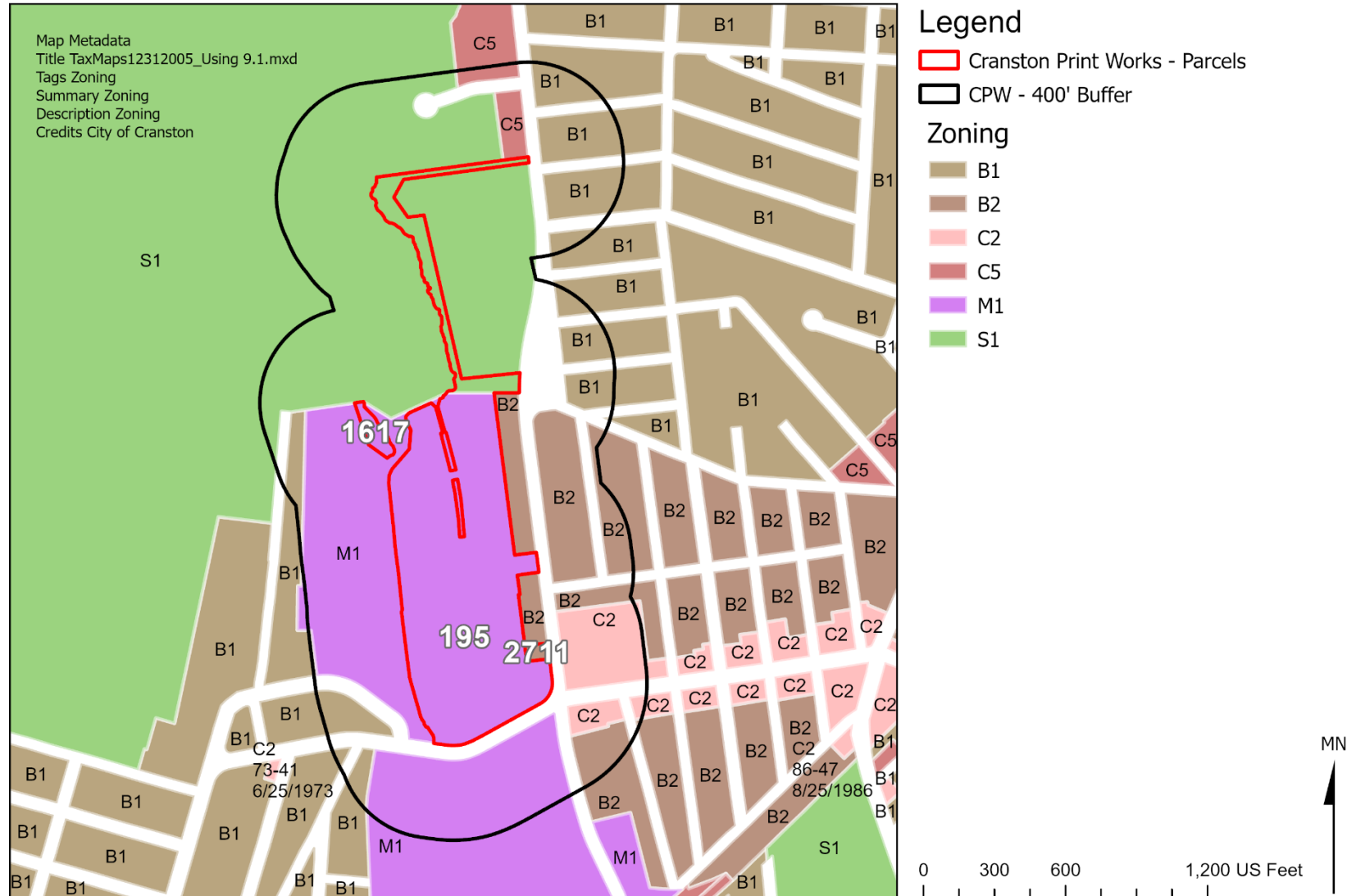
Legend

- Citywide Parcels
- Cranston Print Works - Parcels
- CPW - 400' Buffer



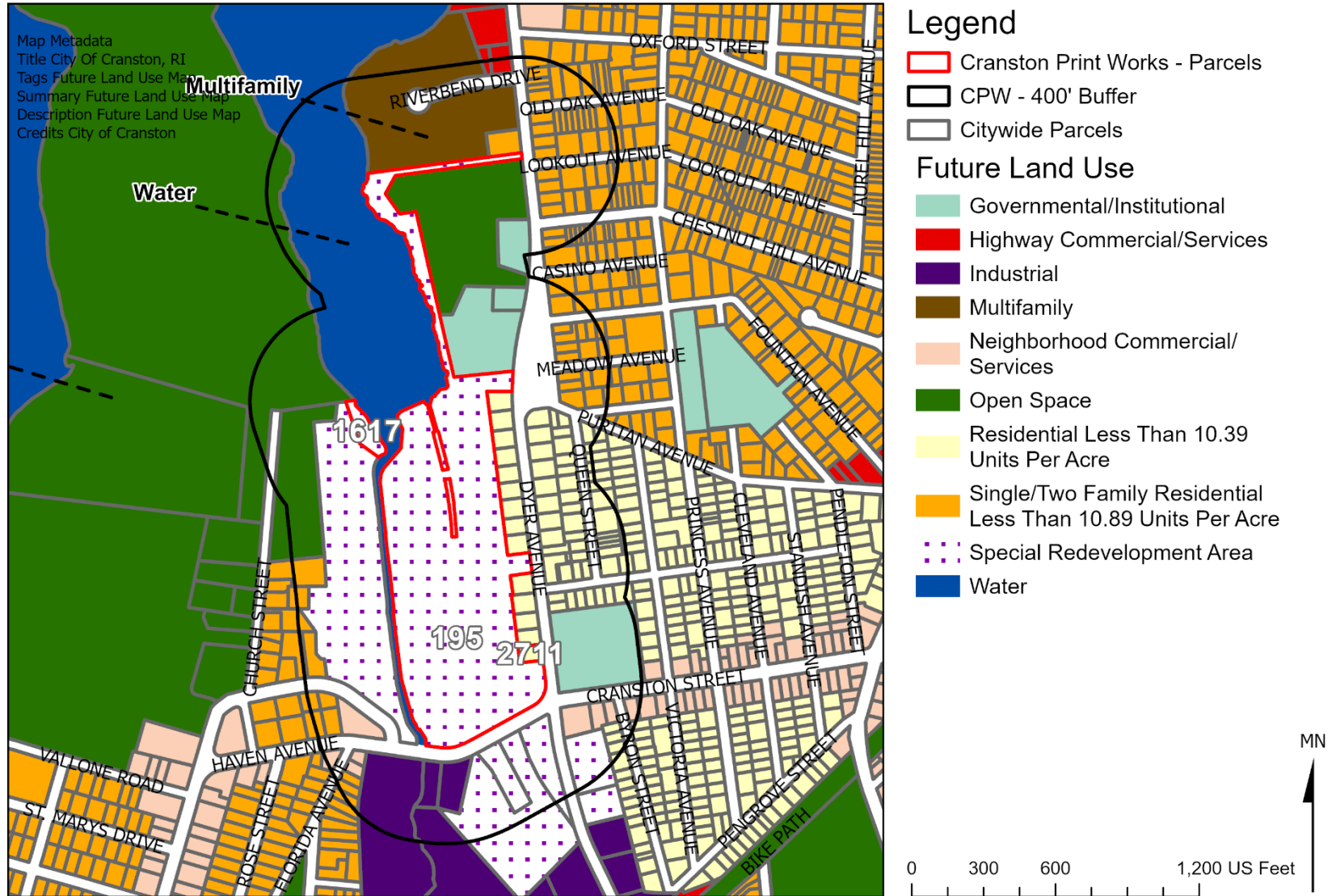
ZONING

THIS MAP IS TO BE USED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY



FUTURE LAND USE

THIS MAP IS TO BE USED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY



3D Aerials

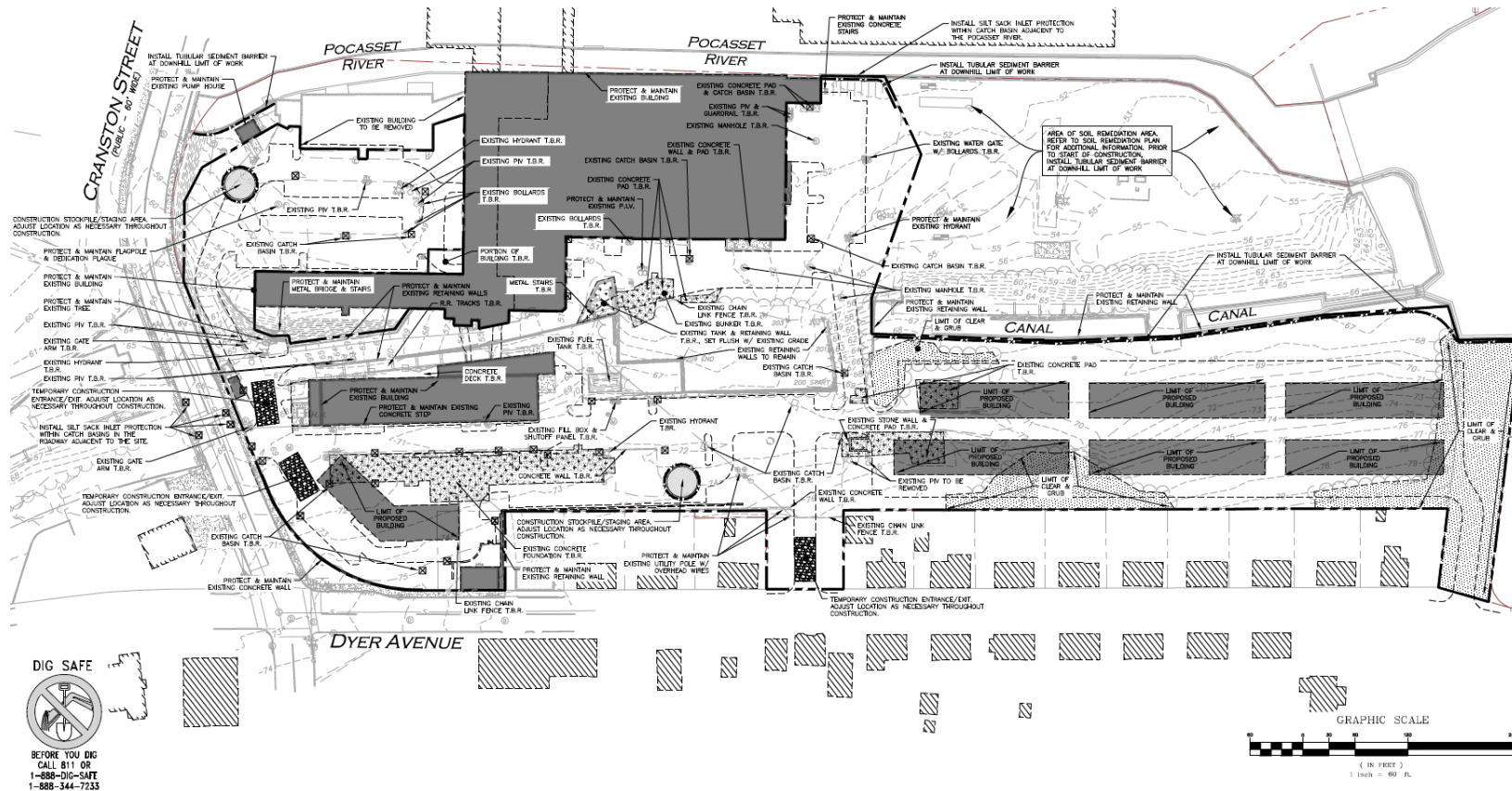




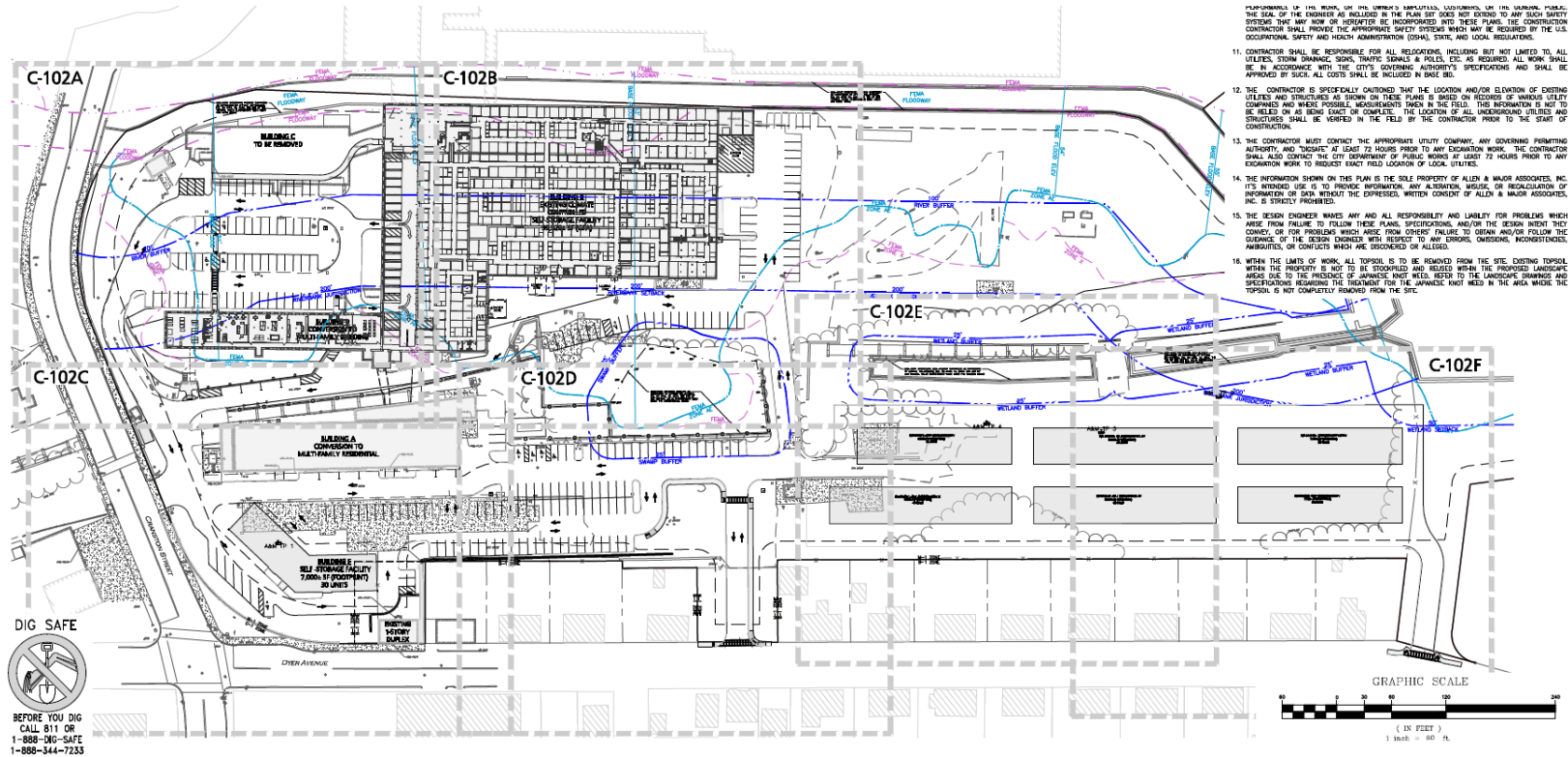
1381 Cranston Street– “Cranston Print Works”
Major Land Development Project – Preliminary Plan: Staff Memorandum – Page 7 of 19



Site Preparation Plan



Site Plan of Proposal



V. Municipal Review

Pursuant to RIGL §45-23-37, these plans and submitted documents were distributed for comment to the following agencies. Responses are as follows:

1. Department of Public Works
 - a. Engineering Division: Mr. Frank Corrao, P.E., Acting Public Works Director, ~~no comments provided~~ commented that the painted, unsignalized crosswalk on Cranston Street west of the fire station will be removed as part of a City-led repaving project on Cranston Street, to encourage use of the safer crossing location at the signalized intersection of Cranston Street and Dyer Avenue.
 - b. Traffic Safety Division: Mr. Steven Mulcahy: no comments provided.
 - c. Sewer Division: Veolia Water provided comments on the Letter of Findings of the Sewer Plan Review that must be addressed prior to Final Plan submission.
 - d. Providence Water Supply Board: PWSB provided comments on the Water Plan Review.
2. Department of Building Inspection & Zoning Enforcement
 - a. Mr. David Rodio, Building Official: no comments provided.
 - b. Mr. Stanley Pikul, Alt. Building Official, no comments provided.
3. Fire Department: Mr. Armand Niquette, Fire Marshal: no comments provided.

In addition to individual reviews, the Development Plan Review Committee, acting also as Technical Review Committee (TRC) held a public meeting on February 19, 2025 to review the Preliminary Plan for approval, as per Section 18.84 of the Zoning Ordinance prior to January 1, 2025. The Committee voted [4-0] (Frank Corrao absent) to approve the DPR Preliminary Plan.

VI. Planning Analysis

Significant planning analysis have been conducted in the Staff Memo for the Master Plan and for the Zone Change Ordinance for this project which have been made available on the Planning Department webpage (<https://www.cranstonri.gov/city-plan-commission-4.1.25/default.aspx>). The analysis for the Preliminary Plan will largely focus on new information submitted as part of this stage of development and any changes that occurred between the Master and Preliminary Plan.

Project History

- As stated in the Master Plan Staff Memo, this property housed active businesses since the early 1800's and up until an economic depression following the civil war. Since then, many of the mill buildings on this site have been demolished and of those that are still intact today, only one remains in active use. This proposal to preserve these historic assets is seen by planning staff as a clear public benefit.
- Master Plan Approval was granted on April 4, 2023 by the City plan Commission on the condition that the Applicant receive approval of the conditional special by the City Council and approval from State agencies.
- City Council and the Mayor approved Ordinance No.2023-6 (1-23-04) on April 24 and April 27, 2023 respectively, creating the conditional special zone for this project.
- The Development Plan Review Committee (DPRC) approved the Preliminary Plan on February 19, 2025. The process to require approval from both the City Plan Commission and the DPRC is not required under the current Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations as of January 1, 2024. However, the Master Plan of this project was approved in 2023 and therefore is vested under the regulations prior to 2024.

- A one-year extension of the Master Plan Approval was granted on March 4, 2025 by the City Plan Commission.

Changes of Note

The 3-story granite building at the corner of Cranston Street and the Pocasset River identified as “Building C” on the Site Plans is to be demolished as it was deemed structurally insufficient. Instead, the building will be replaced with landscaping and a walkway between the southern parking lot and Building B. As building C was proposed to house residential units, the total number of proposed dwelling units has decreased from 129 to 100.

Consistency with the Surrounding Area

The Proposal is generally consistent with the surrounding area.

- The subject parcel is zoned *M-1 with conditions* (Restricted industry) and abuts M-1, B-2, S-1, and C-2 zoned land.
- The subject property is surrounded by open space (Print Works Pond and St. Ann Cemetery), two and multi-family residential, neighborhood commercial, light industrial, and municipal uses.
- There is an approved master plan for a mixed-use commercial and multifamily development to the south entitled “Knights Corner.”
- Self-storage uses typically produce little traffic and few nuisances, especially compared to most other industrial uses.
- The combination of light industrial and multifamily residential use is consistent with the uses in the area.
- The proposed residential density is 2.37 units/acre and 5.6 units/acre when only considering upland area (total acreage of developable land). This is well within the surrounding residential FLUM designations which are categorized as “residential less than 10.39 units per acre” and “single or two family residential less than 10.89 units per acre.”

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

- The Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designates the subject property as “*Special Redevelopment Area*.”
 - The 2024 Comprehensive Plan does not include any description of the FLUM designations. Though as the FLUM designations have not changed between the 2012 and the 2024 Comprehensive Plan, information will largely be taken from the 2012 Plan.
 - The 2012 Comprehensive Plan states that Special Redevelopment Areas fall under one three categories and this area is defined as follows:
 - “Areas in which the City anticipates undertaking redevelopment through mixed-planned development ordinances such as the Elmwood/Wellington industrial corridor, the **Cranston Printworks**, and the site of the former Trolley Barn;”
 - As stated in the Master Plan Staff Memo: “Staff would note that Special Redevelopment Zones, as defined in the Comprehensive Plan, call for a mix of residential and commercial uses, not industrial. However, of all the potential industrial uses, the applicant’s proposal to include self-storage and mini storage is seen by staff as the least injurious, obnoxious, or offensive industrial use possible to abut residential development. Self-storage is generally seen as a low-impact use; traffic impacts of self-storage is notoriously low, there are no significant parking needs, and there are typically no environmental impacts caused by the operation of self-storage facilities. Given the public benefit of preserving the historic mills, what uses are currently allowed by right within the site in an M-1 zone, and the low-impact nature of the proposed industrial use, staff find the proposed use of self-storage/mini-storage to be acceptable.”
 - Therefore, Staff finds that the Application is consistent with the FLUM designation.

- The Comprehensive Plan outlines goals, policies, and action items pertaining to this Proposal which Staff find support the approval of this Application, specifically:
 - Goal LU-2: Promote mixed use (commercial, industrial, and residential) development that will focus on a few key redevelopment sites, improve the quality of new development, and incorporate ‘smart growth’ principles.
 - Goal H-3: Achieve a balance between economic development and housing in the City.
 - Goal H-4: Promote housing opportunity for a wide range of household types and income levels.
 - Policy H-4: Provide housing resources to support the range of jobs that reflects the City’s economic base and encourage the development of housing at levels that are consistent with household purchasing power.
 - Policy H-5: Maintain the stability of established neighborhoods in connection with continued economic development and revitalization: in particular, protect neighborhoods abutting the City’s major commercial corridors from adverse impacts arising from incompatible uses.
 - Policy H-6: Maintain a varied housing stock, with units of different age, size and type that are affordable to a wide range of incomes
 - Action H-3: Encourage Housing that is mixed into commercial projects.
 - Action H-17: Identify potential sites for redevelopment options for future residential use, and mixed use.
 - Action HCR-3: Continue to identify and implement appropriate economic incentive programs to encourage historic preservation and rehabilitation.
 - Action HCR-6: Continue to work with private property owners to encourage preservation of known archaeological and historic sites on their land.
 - Policy ED-22: Add to the City’s taxable property base by constructing industrial and commercial structures which are properly designed and sited in keeping with environmental, planning and design considerations.

Consistency with the Zoning Ordinance

- The Zoning Map and Ordinance designates the subject property as “*M-1 with conditions*.”
 - Ordinance No. 2023-6 changed the zoning designation of the area under conditions laid out in the ordinance. These conditions specify permissible uses, unit density, building dimensions, off-street parking, and signage.
 - The proposed use (multi-family housing and self-service storage) is explicitly permitted by ordinance in this zoning district.
 - The proposal is consistent with all conditions with Ordinance No. 2023-6.
- Staff find that the Application is directly consistent with the Zoning Ordinance.

Traffic Impacts and Access

- Traffic Impacts were assessed as part of the Master Plan stage through a Traffic Impact and Access Study for this proposal on March 1st, 2023. A peer review has been conducted by Pare Corporation and submitted to the City and the applicant for review on March 24th, 2023. The applicants traffic engineer responded to the peer review to address the concerns highlighted by the peer review on March 30th, 2023.
 - The study concluded as follows:
 - (...) the “Project-related traffic increases will not result in significant increases on overall traffic volumes or traffic delays within the study area.”

- The site driveways will provide efficient access to and from the development.
- The proposed project is projected to be a decrease in traffic generation associated with the site compared to the previous use.
- Traffic associated with the development can be adequately accommodated with existing infrastructure
- The Traffic Impact and Access Study provided a list of recommendations for the project, some of which are not reflected in the Preliminary Plan, including:
 - Driveways should have STOP-signs and painted STOP-bars
 - Landscaping adjacent to the project site driveways should be designed and maintained so as not to restrict lines of site.
- The Traffic Impact and Access Study also discussed that the proposal includes indoor and outdoor parking for bicycles.
 - While indoor bicycle storage has been included Outdoor bicycle parking has not been included on the site plan.
- Staff recommend that inclusion of outdoor bicycle racks, adjustments to landscaping, and the addition of STOP-signs are conditioned as part of the approval.
- Staff note that the Traffic Impact and Access Study considered the originally proposed 129 residential units and not the currently proposed 100 units. Therefore, the impact to surrounding traffic should be less than originally anticipated by the study.
- The unsignalized crosswalk on Cranston Street between the fire station and Print Works features no curb ramps and cannot be easily upgraded to ADA standards as there is a curb inlet on one side and a utility pole on the other. There are a signalized crosswalks at the Cranston Street and Dyer Avenue intersection less than 200 feet from the unsignalized one.
 - The Department of Public Works recommended removal of the crosswalk ~~as part of this project~~, as upgrading the sidewalk would require a safety study and investment from the city. Additionally, the close proximity of the signalized crosswalk would make this crosswalk likely unnecessary. A crosswalk at this location can be revisited if the demand is there after Cranston Print Works and Knights Corner have been developed.



Unsignalized crosswalk on Dyer Ave by Fire Station

- Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site will be achieved via three access points onto public city streets, one existing driveway onto Cranston Street and two proposed driveways onto Dyer Avenue.
- The Department of Public Works and the Fire Department reviewed the plan and determined that it provides adequate access and circulation for private vehicles and emergency services.

Fencing and Landscaping

- Fencing along the site will largely consist of existing fencing that will be brought back up to a good state of repair. This includes the existing concrete wall with a metal fence along the southern boundary of the site and chain-link fencing along the rear of the residential properties on Dyer Avenue. A row of dense evergreen trees will line that property boundary to act as a visual barrier to the neighboring properties
- Trees proposed along Dyer Avenue may interfere with overhead powerlines. In particular the red maples proposed at the southeastern corner of the property and the southern driveway on Dyer Avenue. The pin oak and Armstrong maples at the Cranston Street and Dyer Ave intersection may also interfere with overhead powerlines. The majority of these trees are proposed to be planted within 20 feet of the powerline.
 - Staff recommend moving the red maple species backwards or replacing them with a low-growing tree species that is compatible with overhead wires.



Corner of Cranston St & Dyer Ave



Proposed entrance on Dyer Ave

Environmental Impact

No significant environmental impacts are anticipated. The Proposal will be subject to all state and local regulations pertaining to environmental impacts and wetlands.

- The subject property is outside of any regulated resource areas under jurisdiction of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, (RIDEM).
- RIDEM's Natural Heritage Map shows that there are no known rare species located on the site.
- The proposal includes an overall improvement of environmental conditions regarding soil contaminants.
 - Past industrial uses of the subject property have created notable levels of contamination in the surrounding soils and within the building itself.
 - While many of the identified contaminants have been removed or sealed on the subject property, unidentified contaminants may still be present.
 - The applicant has enrolled the property in the site remediation program under the jurisdiction of the RIDEM Office of Land Revitalization and Sustainable Materials Management (OLRSMM). The applicant is continuing to work with RIDEM on a voluntary basis to bring the site into regulatory compliance.
- The Proposal will improve stormwater management on the site and will have limited impact on flood hazard zones.
 - Many existing stormwater structures are in poor condition and likely non-functional. New stormwater infrastructure is proposed to provide water quality improvements through filtering and create a more controlled release of runoff into the Pocasset River.
 - The Proposal includes an increase of impervious area of 34,026 sq ft over existing conditions. Improvements in stormwater management infrastructure is proposed to accommodate for that increase.
 - The Applicant received conditional approval of their Freshwater Wetland Permit on May 8, 2024, which includes review and approval of the proposed stormwater management system. This permit was approved prior to proposed removal of Building C. Due to the decrease of impermeable surfaces; conditions should ideally have improved beyond what was originally approved.

Consistency with the Conditions of Ordinance No. 2023-6 (#1-23-04)

1. Permissible uses – Condition met

- a. Condition: all uses of M-1 zone, multifamily, and amenities for residents such as a health, fitness club
- b. Proposed: self-storage (permitted in M-1), multifamily, and amenities for residents such as a health, fitness club

2. Density - Condition met

- a. Condition: A maximum of one hundred fifty (150) dwelling units shall be permitted
- b. Proposed: 100 dwelling units

3. Dimensional Regulations - Condition met

- a. Condition: Compliance with the intensity regulations set forth in Section 17.20.120 of this code entitled "Schedule of Intensity Regulations" for the M-1 zoning district with the exception of the maximum building height and maximum lot coverage restriction. The maximum building height shall be four (4) stories and fifty (50) feet with an additional ten (10) feet for roof top mechanical equipment. This height limitation shall not apply to the existing bell tower on the premises. The maximum lot coverage shall be sixty (60) percent.
- b. Proposed:

ZONING SUMMARY TABLE		
ITEM	REQUIRED/ALLOWED	PROPOSED
MINIMUM LOT AREA	30,000 sf	1,834,045± sf
MINIMUM LOT WIDTH	150 ft	489± ft
MINIMUM FRONTAGE	150 ft	800± ft
FRONT YARD SETBACK	40 ft	38± ft (Existing)
REAR YARD SETBACK	30 ft	1,928± ft
SIDE YARD SETBACK	20 ft	0.9± ft (Existing)
MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE	60%	9.8%
MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT	35 ft	48± ft (Existing)

Maximum number of stories: 4 (existing) – plus new 2-story building proposed

4. **Off-street parking - Condition met**

- a. Condition: provision of 2 spaces per dwelling unit plus a minimum of 10 spaces for self-storage and mini-storage. $100 \text{ DU} \times 2 + 10 = 210$ parking spaces required.
- b. Proposed: 270 off-street parking spaces

5. **Signage – To be reviewed by the Building Department**

VII. Interests of Others

Zachary Agush, Principal Planner for the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) provided a written statement to the Planning Department on February 18, 2025. The letter states that the development is well served by three RIPTA bus lines and that the development will support ridership growth. Additionally, RIPTA stated their intention to meet with the developer and the City.

VIII. Additional Matters

None at this time.

IX. Waivers

None Requested.

X. Findings of Fact

An orderly, thorough, and expeditious technical review of this Preliminary Plan has been conducted. Property owners within a 100' radius have been notified via first class mail and the meeting agenda has been properly posted.

Staff has reviewed this Preliminary Plan application for conformance and consistency with the required Findings of Fact in accordance with RIGL § 45-23-60 as well as the Subdivision & Land Development Regulations and finds as follows:

RIGL § 45-23-60. Procedure – Required findings. (a)(1) states, “The proposed development is consistent with the comprehensive plan and/or has satisfactorily addressed the issues where there may be inconsistencies.”

- The Proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation of “*Special Redevelopment District*.”
- The Proposal is consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

RIGL § 45-23-60. Procedure – Required findings. (a)(2) states, “The proposed development is in compliance with the standards and provisions of the municipality’s zoning ordinance.”

- The Proposal is consistent with the Zoning Ordinance.
 - The proposed use (multifamily and self-service storage) is a use by-right in the zoning district “M-1 with conditions” granted by Ordinance No. 2023-6 and is consistent with all conditions of said ordinance and all other standards of the Zoning Ordinance.

*RIGL § 45-23-60. Procedure – Required findings. (a)(3) states, “There will be no significant negative environmental impacts from the proposed development as shown on the **final** plan, with all required conditions for approval.” (emphasis added)*

- While this finding is pertaining to the Final Plan submission, no significant environmental impacts are anticipated.
- The Proposal will be subject to all state and local regulations pertaining to environmental impacts, wetlands and erosion control.
- RIDEM's Natural Heritage Map shows that there are no known rare species located on the site.

RIGL § 45-23-60. Procedure – Required findings. (a)(4) states, “The subdivision, as proposed, will not result in the creation of individual lots with any physical constraints to development that building on those lots according to pertinent regulations and building standards would be impracticable. (See definition of Buildable lot). Lots with physical constraints to development may be created only if identified as permanent open space or permanently reserved for a public purpose on the approved, recorded plans.”

- The Proposal will not result in the creation of individual lots with such physical constraints to development that building on those lots according to pertinent regulations and building standards would be impracticable.
- The design and location of building lots, utilities, drainage, and other improvements will conform to local regulations for mitigation of flooding and soil erosion.

RIGL § 45-23-60. Procedure – Required findings. (a)(5) states, “All proposed land developments and all subdivision lots have adequate and permanent physical access to a public street. Lot frontage on a public street without physical access shall not be considered in compliance with this requirement.”

- The Proposal will have adequate and permanent physical access to public city streets (Dyer Avenue and Cranston Street).

XI. Recommendation

Staff finds this Proposal generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, and the standards for required Findings of Fact set forth in RIGL § 45-23-60.

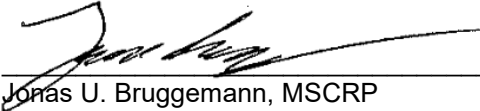
Staff therefore recommends that the City Plan Commission adopt the Findings of Fact documented above and **APPROVE** the Preliminary Plan submittal subject to the conditions denoted below.

XII. Recommended Conditions of Approval

The Final Plan submittal shall be subject to the following:

1. All remaining outside approvals from relevant state and local agencies shall be provided.
2. Remaining comments provided by Veolia Water for the proposed sewer service shall be addressed.
3. Driveways should be placed under STOP-sign control, with a painted STOP-bar included.
4. Alternative arrangement or alternative species shall be proposed for tree plantings along Cranston Street and Dyer Avenue as to avoid interfering with overhead powerlines.
- ~~5. Crosswalk west of the fire station shall be removed to the satisfaction of the Department of Public Works.~~
6. Stationary outdoor bicycle racks shall be provided in a well-lit area near residential entrances of Buildings A, B, and D. Bicycle rack style shall be inverted-U, post-and-ring, or a functional equivalent.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonas U. Bruggemann', is written over a horizontal line.

Jonas U. Bruggemann, MSCRP
Senior Planner / Administrative Officer

Cc: Applicant
City Planning Director
File