

Memo

To: Cranston Planning Commission
From: Doug McLean, AICP - Principal Planner
Date: 5/1/23
Re: “Knights Corner Development”
Major Land Development - Master Plan Application

Owner: N.E. Development Fund, 1 LLC
App: 333 Main Street, LLC
Location: AP 8/2, Lots 203 & 2739
Zone: M-1 (Restricted Industry) – Petition to Rezone to “C-2 with Conditions”
FLU: Special Redevelopment Area

I. Project Description

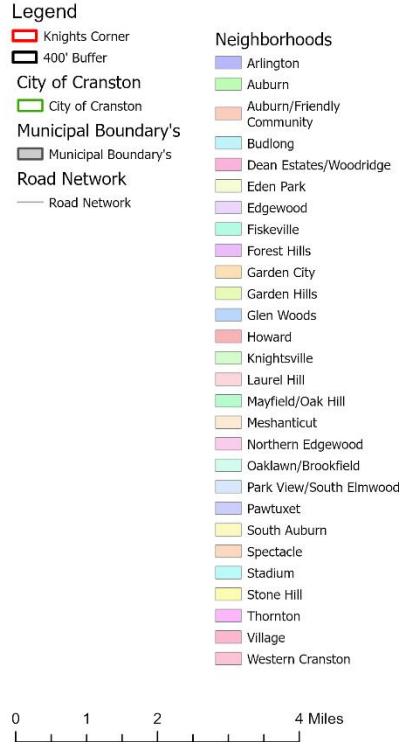
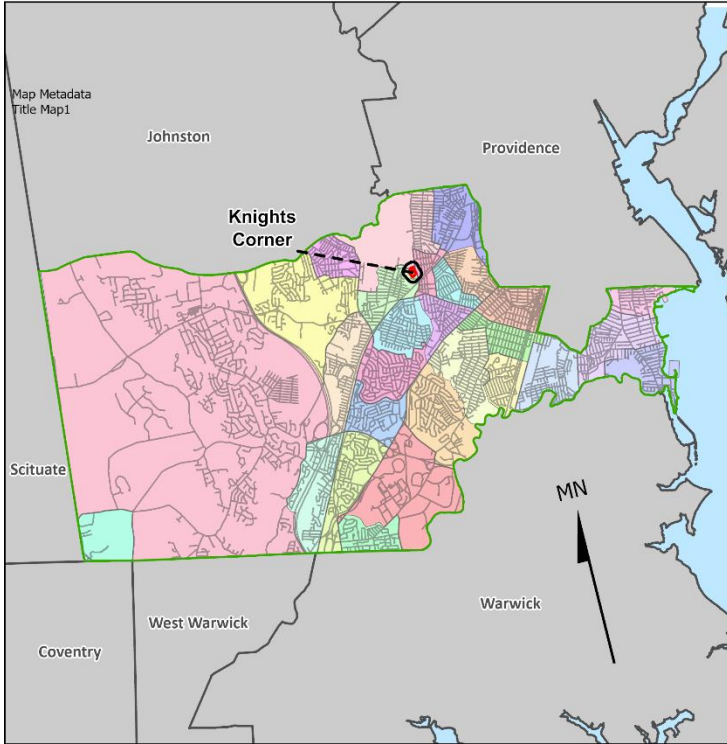
The applicant is seeking to redevelop the property, which currently consists of an abandoned church building, vacant asphalt, and undeveloped land, into a mixed-use development consisting of a restaurant and up to 160 multi-family housing units. The proposal includes the redevelopment of the existing church building, and the new construction of four (4) large-scale apartment buildings, as well as associated parking, landscaping, and accessory recreational amenities.

The immediate proposal includes Major Land Development – Master Plan Application and a corresponding re-zone petition (change of zone from M-1 to “C-2 with Conditions” Ord. #3-23-05). The Master Plan application and the rezone petition are intended to be reviewed in coordinated fashion so that the Plan Commission can see the conceptual layout of the development scheme while also considering changes to zoning provisions as it relates to uses, density, height, parking, etc.

This staff report is intended to cover the Master Plan application only. A separate staff memo will be issued for the formal recommendation on the Zone Change ordinance. All materials for this project, including both staff memos, can be found on the planning webpage here: <https://www.cranstonri.gov/plan-commission-5.2.23/>.

LOCATION

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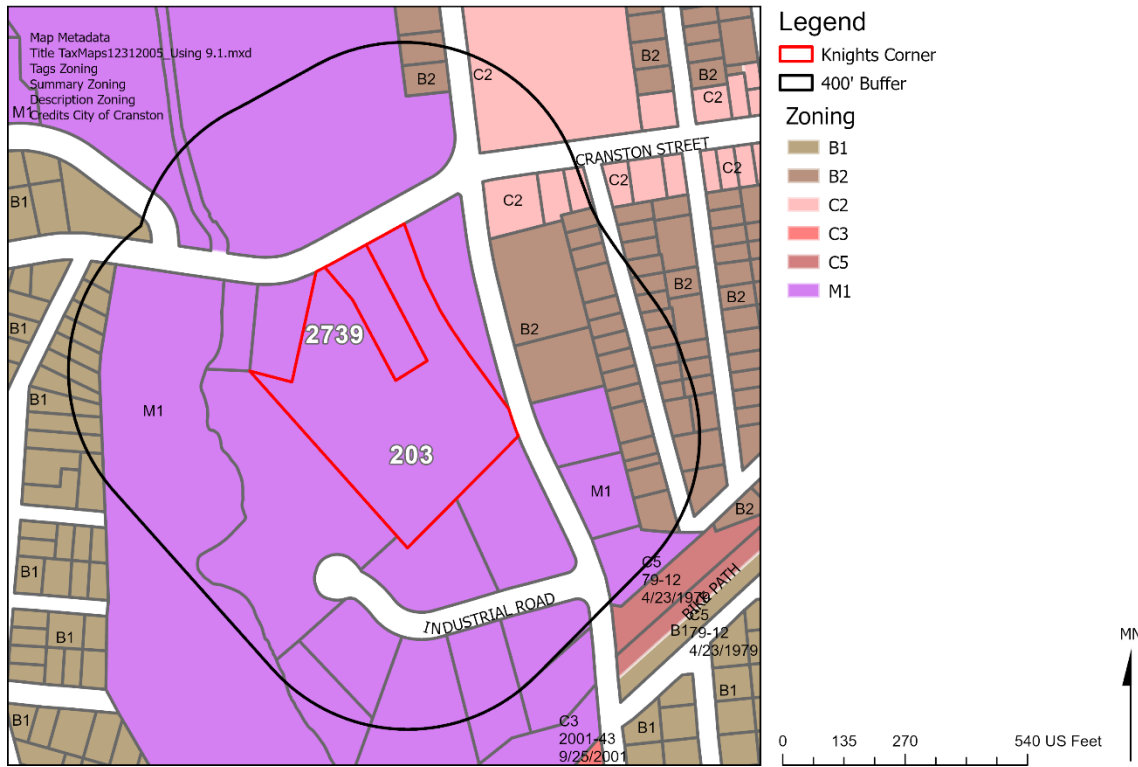
AERIAL VIEW

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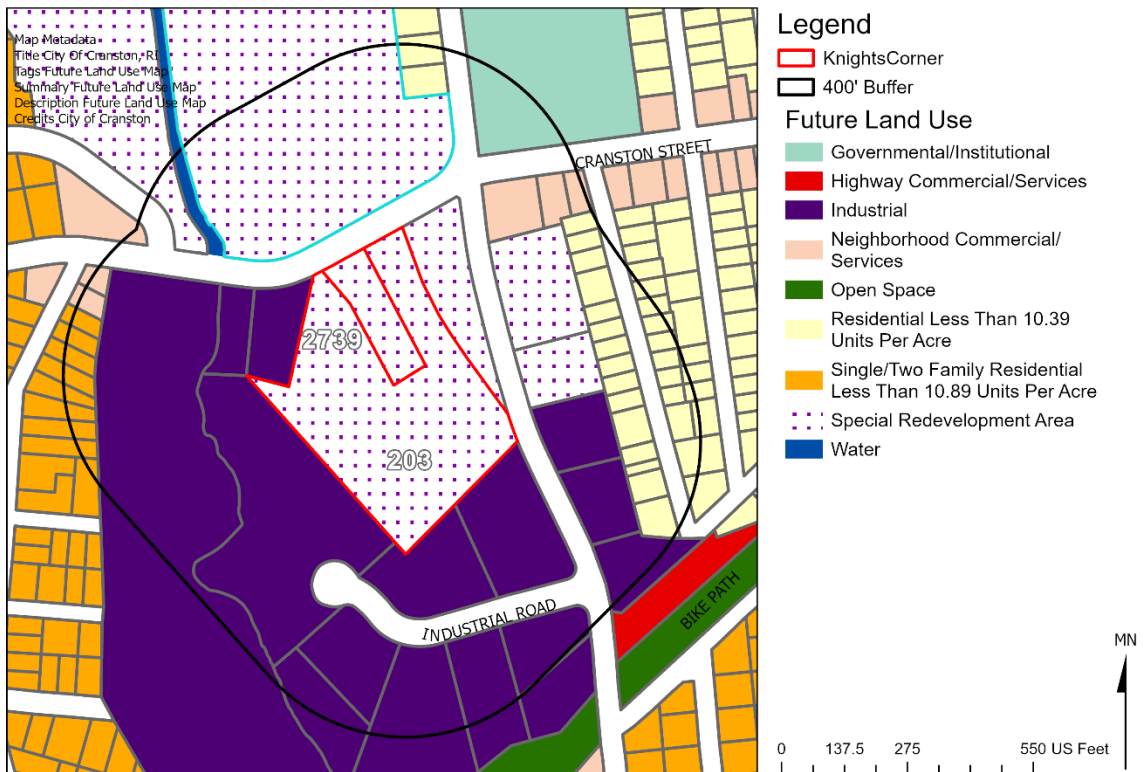
ZONING

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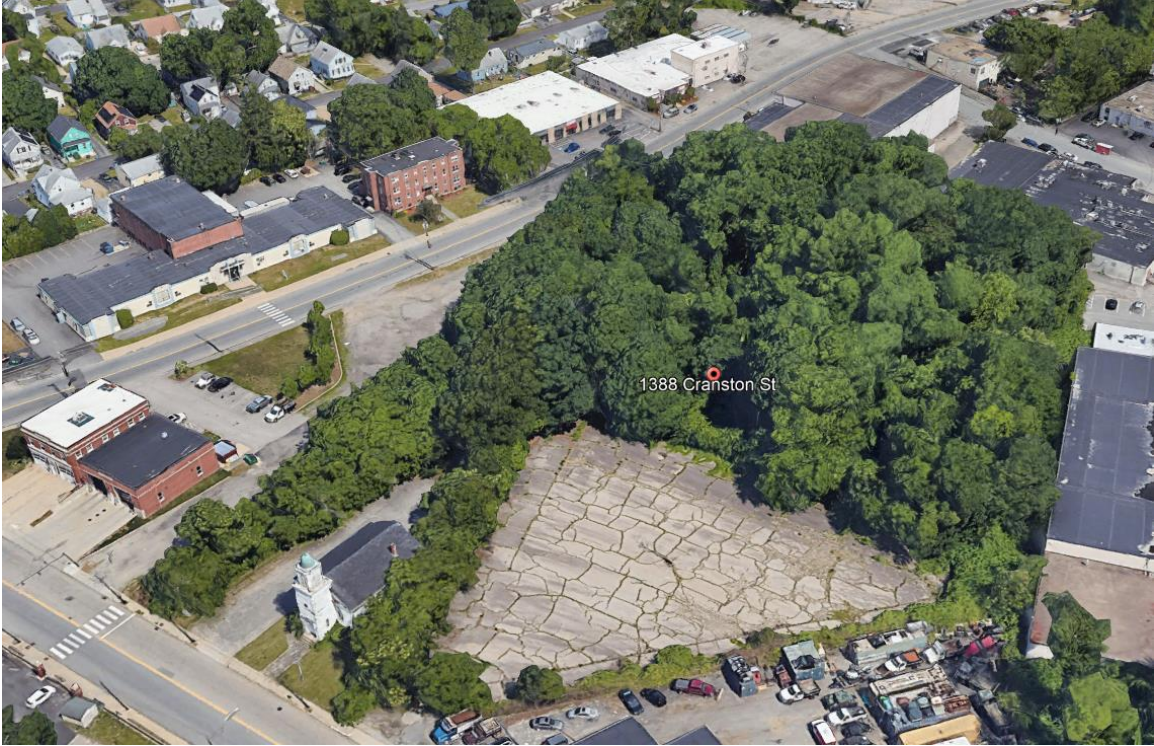


FUTURE LAND USE

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3-D AERIAL



STREET VIEW FROM CRANSTON STREET



SITE PLAN EXHIBIT

AP 8/2
LOT 2740
N/F
THOR CONSON



II. Documents which are part of the application

- Master Plan Application and Checklist signed by Mr. Jeremy Moses (owner of 333 Main Street, LLC) submitted 4/8/23.
- Filing fee in the form of check #1250, in the amount of \$15420.00 from 555 Main Street, LLC.
- Master Plan Major Land Development plan set entitled “Cranston Street Multi-Family” prepared by DiPrete Engineering
- Architectural plan set prepared by Ronald Stevenson and South County Architecture and Design, Inc.
- 100’ radius map, list of abutters and copies of the mailing labels.
- Project narrative summary prepared by DiPrete Engineering, Inc. dated 4/6/2023
- Traffic Impact Study prepared by BETA Group, Inc., submitted April 11, 2023
- Peer Review from Pare Engineering dated 4/26/23
- Fiscal Impact Study prepared by JDL Enterprises, dated April 2023
- Wetlands edge Delineation Data Form dated 4/20/17
- Sewer availability letter dated 4/4/23
- Providence Water availability letter dated 2/22/23
- Municipal Lien Certificates (2)

III. Surrounding land use and context

Analysis using the City of Cranston Geographic Information System indicates that:

1. The subject parcel is in the Laurel Hill neighborhood of Cranston, situated at the intersection of Cranston Street and Dyer Avenue, located directly adjacent to the Cranston Printworks complex.
2. The surrounding neighborhood is a mix of B-1, B-2, C-2, C-5, M-1, and S-1 (Open Space).
3. There is an isolated wetland flagged in the Southern portion of the site. The wetland edge was delineated on 4/20/17. It is anticipated that RIDEM verification of the wetland edge will come as part of the Preliminary Plan submission and staff have added a condition of approval to the enclosed Master Plan decision as such.
4. The proposed development is located outside of any floodplain / floodway areas.

IV. Staff / Agency Comments

Pursuant to RIGL 45-23-41 A3, these plans were distributed for comment to the Providence Water Supply Board, Veolia Water, Public Works Department / Engineering Division, Building and Zoning Department, and the Fire Department.

- **The Providence Water Supply Board** – Has provided a letter regarding water availability.
- **Veolia Water** – Has provided a letter regarding sewer availability.
- **Public Works Department** – No comment provided at this time.

- **Fire Department** – The City’s Fire Marshall has reviewed the application and provided the following comment: Items I would like to see or have verified;
 - Truck turning plan.
 - Yard hydrant locations? Roughly measuring from street hydrant locations. There are two, one on Dyer Ave. and the other on Cranston St. The Engine Company that has to go to the hydrant and then drop a feeder line to the Engine parked at a building involving an incident, could layout about 600 to 700 feet of 5” hose. Because of that amount of hose going through the parking lots, it will limit other apparatus from gaining access to the property.
 - The Fire Station shown on the drawing will lose the access it has enjoyed for decades on the south-western side of the building. The trucks housed at that station utilize the dirt driveway to enter from Cranston St. and drive through to Dyer Ave. or vice versa. It is utilized multiple times a day for especially performing Ladder truck daily checks. By eliminating that driveway, the trucks would be forced to back out of the rear parking lot onto busy Dyer Ave. Is it possible to be granted an easement?
 - As of this time, these are my immediate concerns. As this project begins to move forward I may find other issues or concerns to comment on.
- **Building and Zoning Department** – No comments provided at this time.
- **Bureau of Traffic Safety** - The City’s Traffic Safety Manager has reviewed the applicant’s initial traffic study and has provided the following comment: I will provide more detailed comments after submission of the peer review report and the applicant’s response (Note: City Traffic Safety Manager has been out of the office since 4/27 and will not return until 5/4).

V. Interests of Others

None to report at this time.

VI. Planning Analysis

The proposal is for a mixed-use development consisting of a restaurant and up to 160 multi-family housing units. The corresponding zone change allows for up to 160 units, but the applicant is only seeking 156 units as part of this Master Plan application. The applicant will be re-using an abandoned church building for the restaurant and will be constructing four (4) new large-scale buildings for the multi-family residential units, as well as associated parking, landscaping, and accessory recreational amenities.

Consistency with the Surrounding Area

The surrounding neighborhood is a mix of B-1, B-2, C-2, C-5, M-1 and S-1 (Open Space). Consisting of a mix of two-family homes, single family homes, multi-family buildings, and a mix of industrial, commercial, and municipal facilities. Based on the mix of zones and uses within the neighborhood, as well as the industrial uses within the immediate abutting parcels, staff finds that the project will not negatively impact that surrounding area as far as land use compatibility. Additionally, there is no residential density requirement in the Comprehensive Plans Future Land Use Map for Special Redevelopment Areas.

Status of Traffic Review

The City has requested that a 3rd party peer reviewer (Pare Corporation) conduct a review of the applicant's traffic study as part of the Master Plan stage of this application. The applicants' traffic study was submitted on 4/11. Pare Corporation completed their peer review and submitted their written comments on 4/26. The applicant has stated they will provide a response to the peer review comments on 5/1. When the applicant's traffic response is provided it will be added to the planning website here:

<https://www.cranstonri.gov/plan-commission-5.2.23/>

Final reviews and comments by the 3rd party peer reviewed and the City Traffic Safety Manager will be provided and addressed prior to the Preliminary Plan submission and staff have added a condition of approval to the enclosed Master Plan decision as such.

Off-Street Parking

There are 262 parking spaces proposed on the site plan, 234 being allocated to the multi-family and 32 for the proposed restaurant. City Code Section 17.64 Off-Street Parking stipulates that multi-family uses provide 2 parking spaces per unit. The proposal does not meet that requirement with 2.00 (two) spaces per dwelling unit and instead is seeking a reduction to this parking requirement as part of their zone change. The zone change reflects an allowance of 1.25 spaces per unit, but the applicant's Master Plan application is seeking 1.5 spaces per unit. Planning staff have no concerns with this aspect of the proposal based on a similar parking ratio for other large scale mixed-use proposals in the City, as well the evidence provided within the applicant's materials and traffic study. Staff would note the characteristics of this site are supportive of a relaxed parking ratio as compared to the base City standard, due to the location of the development based on the surrounding conditions (lack of residential abutters), and access to transit and sufficient multi-modal accommodations. Furthermore, the number of parking spaces allocated on the site plan exceeds the minimum number of parking spaces to be allocated as described in proposed ordinance #3-23-05. This inclusion shows a good faith effort made by the applicant to ensure that, if needed, parking on-site can be increased, if need be, to meet the demand of future renters of apartment units in the development.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designation for this site is a Special Redevelopment Area which is defined as "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;". Note this site is on the opposite side of the street as the Cranston Print Works site and is considered part of the same neighborhood. Furthermore, this scale of development fits neatly under the Mixed-Use Planned Development (MUPD) – High Intensity category, which is described as "a mixed-use zone(which) would be suited for predominantly mixed commercial development, with live/work space or artists' lofts... It would also be suitable for encouraging significant redevelopment, and improved when it is adjacent to public transportation." in the Comprehensive Plan. Based on the above, staff finds that the proposed Major Land Development is consistent with the City of Cranston Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation of Special Redevelopment Area.

Staff has reviewed the project in comparison the Comprehensive Plan's policy framework and finds that the proposal is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan goals and policies:

LUG-2 – Promote mixed use (commercial, industrial, and residential) development that will:

- *Focus on a few key redevelopment sites;*
- *Improve the quality of new development;*
- *Incorporate 'smart growth' principles.*

HA-3 – Encourage Housing that is mixed into commercial projects.

HG -3 – Achieve a balance between economic development and housing in the City.

HP-3.1 – 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.

HP-3.2 – 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.

HG-4 – Promote housing opportunity for a wide range of household types and income levels.

HP-4.1 – Maintain a varied housing stock, with units of different age, size and type that are affordable to a wide range of incomes.

HP-4.2 – Identify potential sites for redevelopment options for future residential use, and mixed use.

HA-1: Increase affordable housing in new subdivisions and development projects as appropriate through incentives and bonuses.

HA-2: Require a proportion of units as affordable housing (as defined by State regulations) in each new housing project over ten units in size.

HA-10: Provide density bonuses for developments that incorporate a specified proportion of affordable housing.

VII. Findings of Fact

An orderly, thorough, and expeditious technical review of this Master Plan has been conducted. Property owners within a 100' radius have been duly notified via first class mail, a display advertisement was published in the Cranston Herald and the meeting agenda has been properly posted.

Staff has reviewed this Master Plan application for conformance with required standards set forth in RIGL Section 45-23-60, as well as the City of Cranston's Subdivision and 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 community plan and/or has satisfactorily addressed the issues where there may be inconsistencies.”

1. The proposed Major Land Development is consistent with the City of Cranston Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation of Special Redevelopment area and is also consistent with the Plan’s policy framework, as further detailed within the staff memorandum.

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.”

2. To the extent that any development of the subject property will be required to comply with the Zoning Ordinance and is providing a corresponding zone change petition, staff finds that the proposed Master Plan Application is in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance with the assumption that the re-zone petition is ultimately approved by the City Council.

*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)*

3. This finding pertains specifically to the final plan; however, no significant environmental impacts are anticipated.
4. The project will be subject to all state and local regulations pertaining to environmental impacts and wetlands.
5. The Rhode DEM’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.”

6. The proposed development 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.
7. The design and location of building lots, utilities, drainage and other improvements will conform to local regulations for mitigation of flooding and soil erosion, details of which will be reviewed during the Preliminary Plan phase of the application.

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.”

8. The properties in question have adequate permanent physical access to a Dyer Avenue and Cranston Street.

VIII. Recommendation

Staff finds this proposal consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-23-60 as well as with the City of Cranston's Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the findings of fact documented above and **approve** the Master Plan submittal subject to the conditions denoted below.

Conditions of approval:

1. The applicant shall obtain approval of the conditional special zone by the City Council prior to Preliminary Plan submission.
2. Applicant shall obtain all necessary approvals from outside State agencies, including wetland edge verification from RIDEM, prior to Preliminary Plan submission.
3. The application shall address final comments from the City's 3rd party peer reviewer for traffic and final comments from the City Traffic Safety Manager prior to Preliminary Plan submission.
4. The applicant shall address the comments provided by the Fire Department prior to Preliminary Plan submission.