

# City Planning Department



## Memo

To: Cranston City Plan Commission  
From: Doug McLean, AICP, Principal Planner  
Date: March 2, 2023  
Re: "Residences at Oaklawn Ave", AP 17, Lot 670  
**Major Land Development – Master Plan Application**

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**Owner/App: Amalgamated Financial Equities, LLC**  
**Location: 0 Oaklawn Ave, AP 17, Lot 670**  
**Zone: Currently A-8 (proposed change to "B-2 with conditions")**  
**FLU: Currently "Single Family Residential 7.26 To 3.64 Unit Per Acre" (proposed change to "Multi-Family")**

### I. Proposal

This memo contains background information, findings, and the recommendation for the Major Land Development - Master Plan application above noted. This application is accompanied by two (2) separate Ordinance petitions to seek a zone change and Comprehensive Plan amendment. All staff memos and application materials on this matter can be found at the following link: <https://www.cranstonri.gov/plan-commission-3.7.23/>

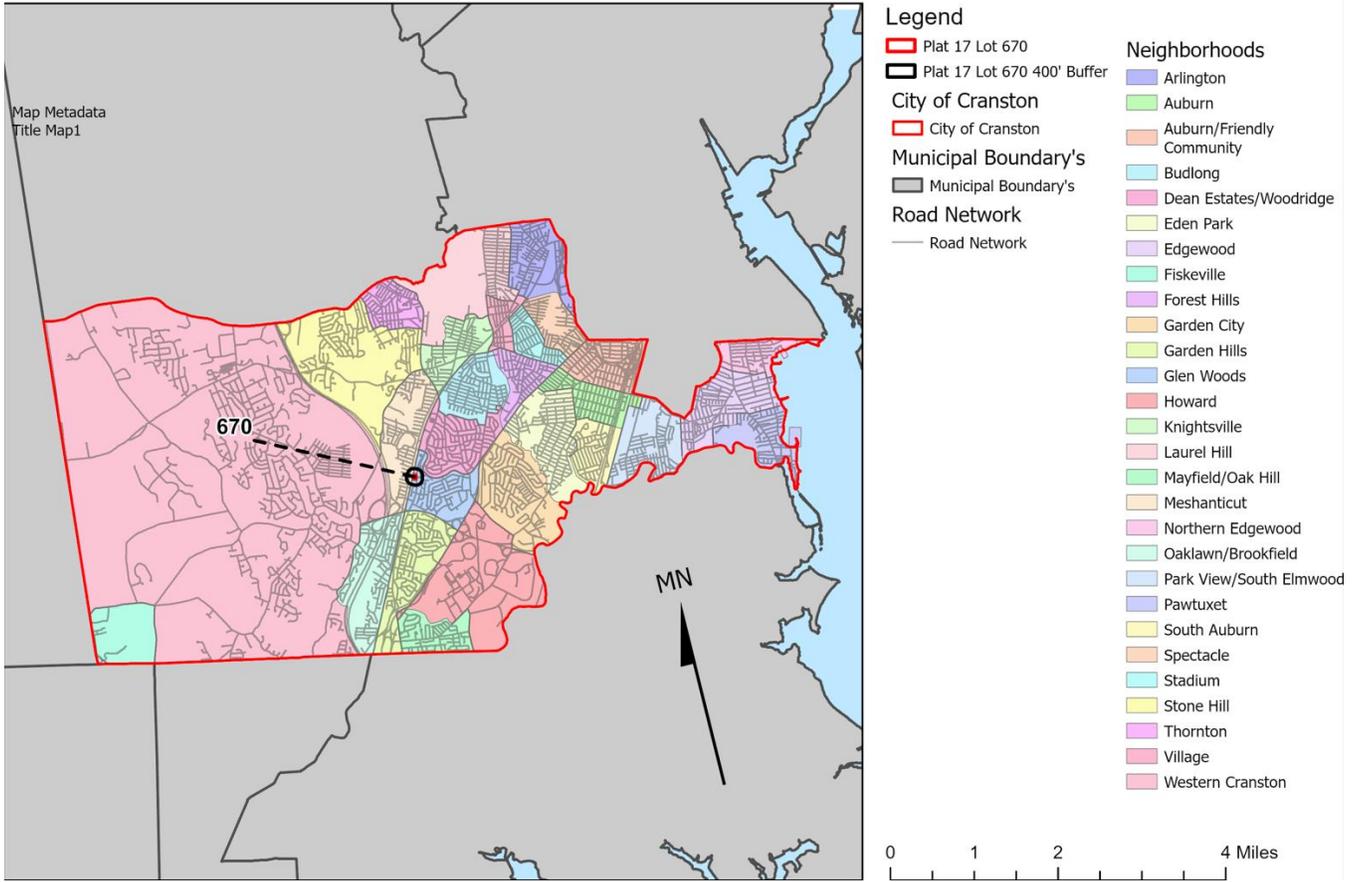
The proposed Major Land Development (MLD) is to construct a new 12-unit multi-family apartment building with associated parking and landscaping. The subject property is 34,743 SF in area with 233 feet of frontage. The companion zone change and Comprehensive Plan amendment petitions would allow for a density bonus to achieve the requested number of housing units. The zone change would also require that two (2) of the units be deed restricted as affordable housing, representing 16.7% of the total units. Should the companion Ordinances be approved by the City Council, the proposal will meet the City's zoning requirements and will not otherwise require relief.

### II. Documents as part of the proposed Major Land Development application:

1. Master Plan application and checklist;
2. Application filing fees;
3. Major Land Development site plan entitled "Residences at Oaklawn Ave" prepared by Garofalo and Associate, Inc., with stamp dated 10/27/22;
4. Project Narrative prepared by Garofalo and Associate, Inc;
5. Traffic Statement prepared by Garofalo and Associate, Inc;
6. Historic Cemetery Report by Public Laboratory Archaeology, Inc.
7. Certificate of Municipal Liens.

# LOCATION

**THIS MAP IS TO BE USED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY**



# AERIAL VIEW

THIS MAP IS TO BE USED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY



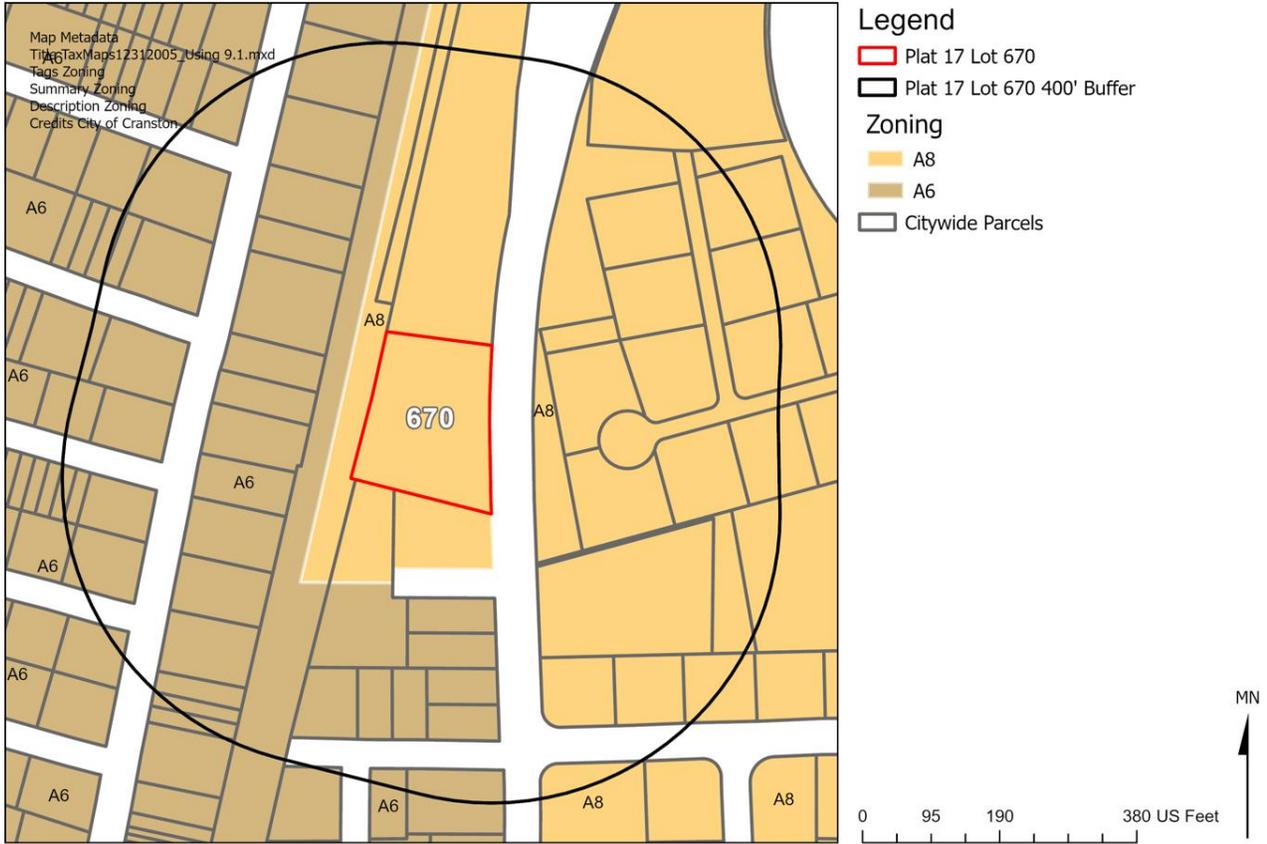
## Legend

- Citywide Parcels
- Plat 17 Lot 670
- Plat 17 Lot 670  
400' Buffer



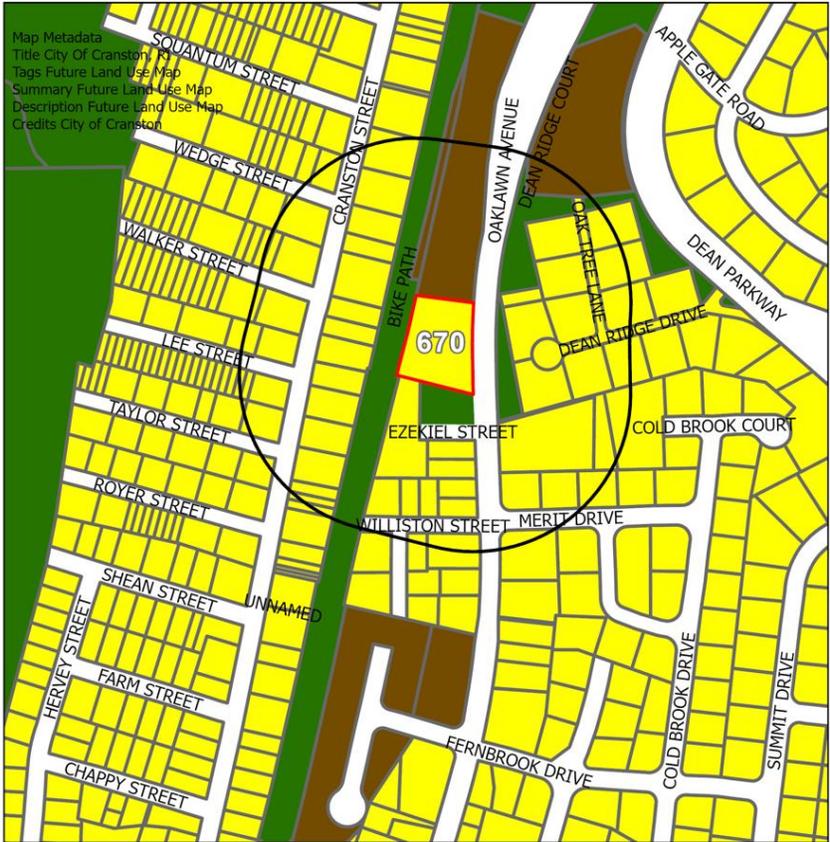
# ZONING

**THIS MAP IS TO BE USED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY**



# FUTURE LAND USE

THIS MAP IS TO BE USED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY



- ### Legend
- Plat 17 Lot 670 400' Buffer
  - Plat 17 Lot 670
  - Citywide Parcels
  - Future Land Use**
    - Multifamily
    - Open Space
    - Single Family Residential 7.26 To 3.64 Unit Per Acre



# 3-D VIEW



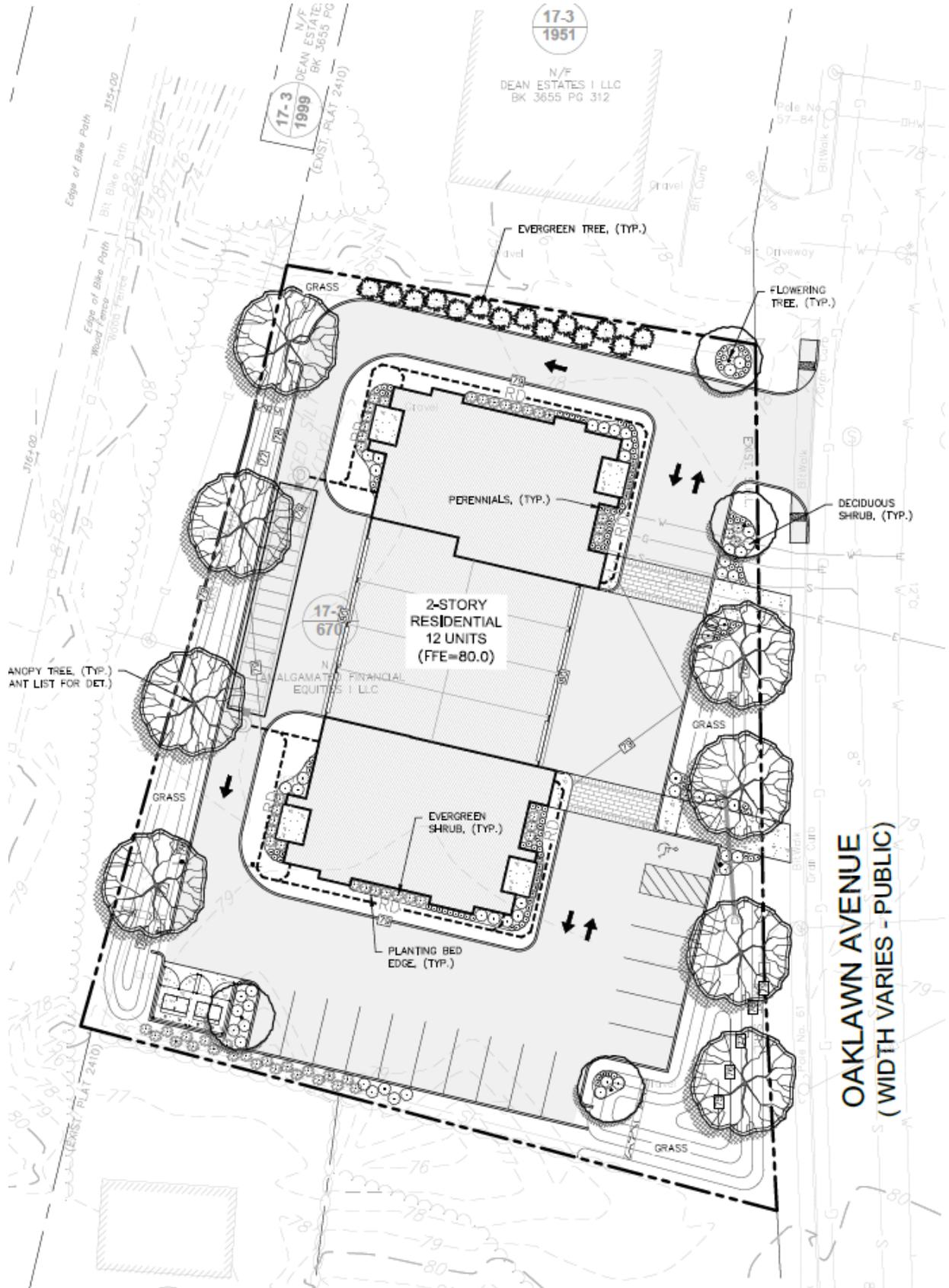
**STREET VIEW**  
(from Oaklawn Ave facing subject property)



**STREET VIEW**  
(from Oaklawn Ave facing opposite side as subject property)



# PROPOSED MASTER PLAN



### **III. Surrounding land use and context**

Analysis using Geographic Information System indicates that:

1. The subject parcel is located in Central Cranston with frontage on Oaklawn Avenue.
2. The abutting properties contain a mix of land uses, including: a large apartment complex to the north, a bike path to the east, a single-family dwelling (with large garage abutting subject land) and cemetery to the south, and a wall structure across the street to the west (see image on page 7 of this memo).
3. The subject property is vacant with minor vegetative features.
4. The site is generally flat and does not offer significant topography.
5. The project is free of any regulated floodplains or historic/cultural districts.
6. The property is abutting a historic cemetery as proper documentation of proposed ground disturbing activities has been entered into the record.
7. The 2018 Natural Heritage Map does not show any known rare species located on or near the site.

### **IV. Staff / Agency Comments**

Pursuant to RIGL 45-23-41 A3, these plans were distributed for comment to the Public Works Department, Engineering Division, Traffic Division, Building and Zoning Department, and the Fire Department.

- The City Public Work Director provided the following comment: *This office has reviewed the applicant's site plan and specifically the areas outlined as stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs). This office anticipates diligent review of pending drainage information, including calculations and design, as part of the Preliminary Plan application stage.*
- The City Fire Marshall provided the following comment: *This office has reviewed the applicant's site plan and request that a fire truck turning plan be included as part of Preliminary Plan submission.*

No other City Departments have provided comments or concerns at this time.

### **V. Interests of Others**

No public comments have been received by staff at this time.

### **VI. Planning Analysis**

The proposed Major Land Development – Master Plan application is to construct a single apartment building with a total of 12 units with interior and exterior parking. As previously discussed, this application has two (2) companion Ordinance petitions to seek a zone change and Comprehensive Plan amendment in order to facilitate the regulatory changes needed for this project to move forward. The zone change is seeking a density bonus of 12 housing units, in which 2 of the units will be deed restricted as affordable (16.7%). No dimensional relief is being sought through the zone change ordinance, so the proposed building and lot characteristics will conform to all required zoning provisions aside from the density bonus of 12 housing units.

The subject property is unique in that the properties immediately surrounding the subject lot are not typical for a single-family residential neighborhood, such as: a large apartment complex to the north, a bike path to the east, a single-family dwelling (with large garage abutting subject land) and cemetery to the south, and a wall structure across the street to the west (see image on page 7 of this memo). Based on the uses and conditions of the direct abutting properties, and based on the fact that the proposal is seeking a residential use without need for relief from required minimum setbacks, building height, building lot coverage, or parking, staff finds that the proposal is generally compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

The project has received the requisite approval from the Town Council for taking action within 25 feet of a historic cemetery. No adverse historic impacts will result from this project.

It should be noted that this application is accompanied by a number of “expert documents” related to the issues of planning, traffic, fiscal impact, and historic cemetery impact. These documents provide positive support for the application and are available for review at the following link:

<https://www.cranstonri.gov/plan-commission-3.7.23/>

Also available at the above link is a separate staff memo with the analysis and recommendations on the two (2) ordinance petitions. The other memo contains additional context on the project’s consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. It should be noted that the Comprehensive Plan analysis for this project should be made relative to the proposed Plan Amendment seeking a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation for the property of “Multi-Family”. In this case, the project is wholly consistent with this FLUM designation because it does not establish a maximum housing density and is defined as follows:

*“Multi-Family: The Plan identifies the larger existing complexes of rental or condominium developments as Multi-family. The appropriate zoning designation for Multi-family is B-2, C-1 and C-2.”*

Some of the Housing Element policies that are particularly relevant are:

*“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.”*

*“Plan Strategies and Actions*

*As an initial goal, this Plan proposes that the City take active steps to bring it into conformity with the State’s mandate for affordable housing...”*

Based on the above, staff is of the view that the Master Plan application is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

## VII. Findings of Fact

An orderly, thorough and expeditious technical review of this Major Land Development - Master Plan application has been conducted. Property owners within a 100' radius have been 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 per the companion amendment application to change the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation to “Multi-Family” because the application is specifically proposing a use (multi-family residential) that is allowed by this FLUM designation.
2. The proposal is consistent with the City of Cranston Comprehensive Plan policy framework because the weight of policies with the Plan – specifically the Housing Element - support the density bonus and affordable housing provision as is being provided here.

*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.”*

3. The proposed Major Land Development is consistent with the City of Cranston Zoning Code per the companion ordinance application for a zone change to “B-2 with conditions” because the application fits within the proposed zoning provisions of the proposed 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)*

4. This finding pertains specifically to the final plan, however, no significant negative environmental impacts as related to City code are anticipated based on review of the conceptual Master Plan application.
5. The Rhode Island November 2018 Natural Heritage map shows that there are no known rare species located on the site.
6. Significant cultural or historic resources that contribute to the attractiveness of the community have not been identified on 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.”*

7. The proposed subdivision 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.

*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 subject property will have adequate permanent physical access to the public rights-of-way in the City of Cranston of Oaklawn Avenue.

## **IX. 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 documented findings of fact and **approve** the Major Land Development - Master Plan application with the conditions noted below:

- 1) The City Council must approve Ordinance #1-23-01 for the corresponding Comprehensive Plan Amendment prior to Preliminary Plan submission.
- 2) The City Council must approve Ordinance #1-23-02 for the corresponding Change of Zone petition prior to Preliminary Plan submission.