

City Planning Department



Memo

To: Cranston City Plan Commission
From: Joshua Berry, AICP - Senior Planner
Date: July 8, 2022
Re: "Trolley Barn Plaza" - Preliminary Plan - Major Land Development

Owner/App: Brewery Parkade, Inc., and Charles Montague Realty, LLC and Charlotte Montague Realty, LLC, as Tenants-in-Common, c/o First Hartford Realty, Corp.
Location: 777 Cranston Street, AP 7, Lot 1
Zone: C-5 with conditions
FLU: Highway Commercial/Services

Link to application materials: <https://www.cranstonri.gov/city-plan-commission.7.12.22/>

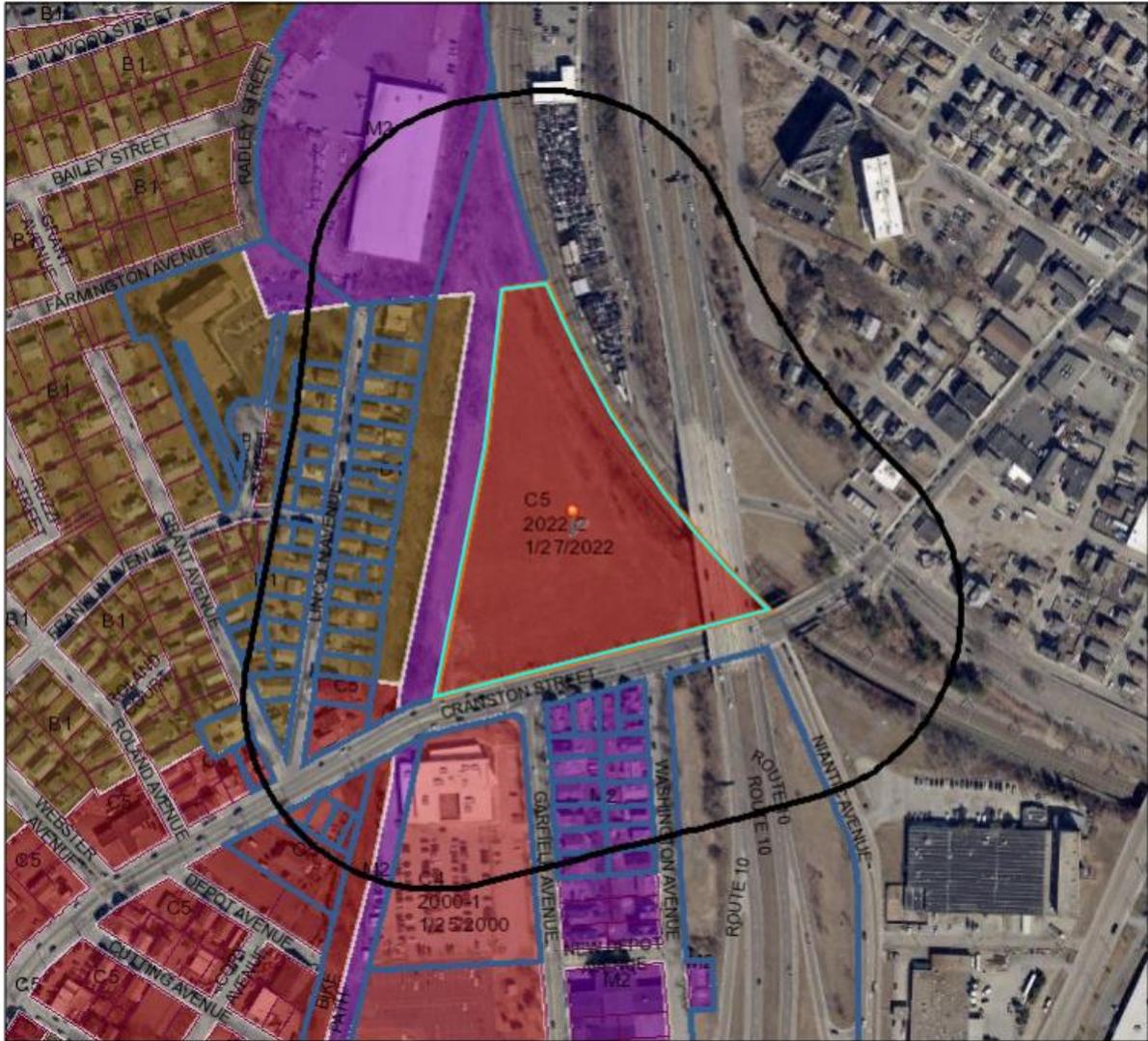
I. Proposal

Moving forward after receipt of the master plan, zone change and Comprehensive Plan amendments approvals obtained in December of 2021, the applicant proposes a multi-use commercial project including a carwash, gas station/mini-mart, fast food restaurant and a 35,000 ft² AutoZone with both retail and warehousing/distribution components. The bank, mini-mart and fast-food restaurant all have drive-thru features.

The main changes to the site plan since the master plan approval of this project are as follows:

1. The bank that was in the southeastern corner of the site has been replaced by a carwash in the southwest corner of the site.
2. The fast-food restaurant that was in the southwestern corner of the site has been relocated to the southeastern corner of the site.
3. The right-out only curb cut located in the southwestern corner of the site has been removed. In lieu, a right-out only lane has been added to the main access point.
4. The future 20'-wide bike path connection has been clearly delineated.
5. Numerous modifications were made to the parking and internal circulation configurations.
6. Information was included within the plan set to comply with the required level of detail for preliminary plan review, including but not limited to pedestrian paths, landscaping, lighting, grading, drainage, utility connections, dumpster locations & screening, and more.

ZONING MAP



UserSelectedParcels	Zoning	B2	EI
vParcels_Buffer	none	C1	MPD
ParcelsInBufferOutput	A80	C2	S1
Parcels	A20	C3	Other
Streets Names	A12	C4	Street Names
Zoning Dimensions	A8	C5	Red: Red
Historic Overlay District	A6	M1	Green: Green
	B1	M2	Blue: Blue

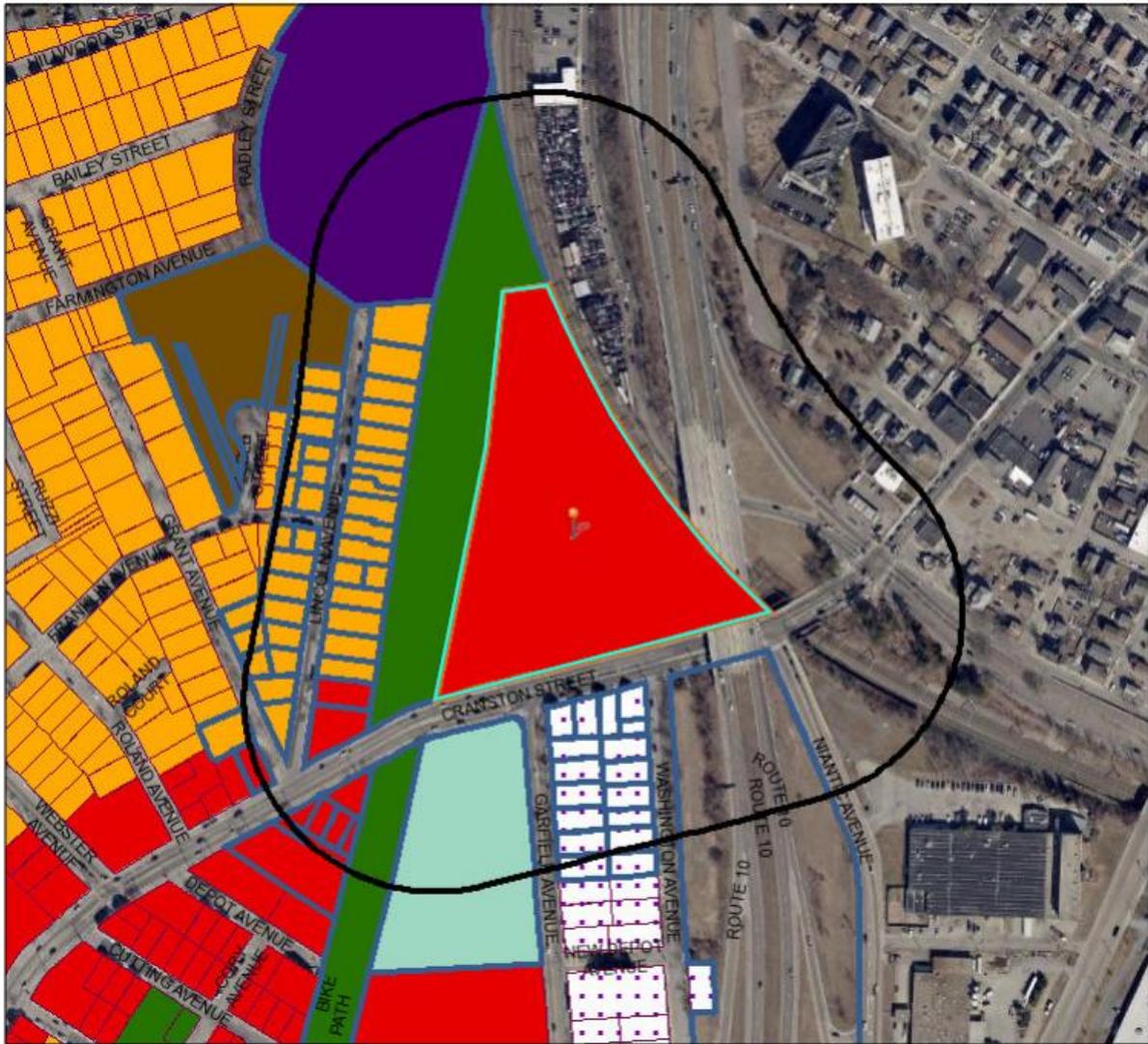


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FUTURE LAND USE MAP



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City of Cranston

**NEIGHBORHOOD AERIAL
(400 ft. radius in black)**



3-D AERIAL (facing north)



3-D AERIAL (facing east)



SITE RENDERING*



*The above rendering is from the master plan phase and does not include the modifications to the plan since the master plan approval.

STREET VIEW (Cranston Street facing north)



LANDSCAPE PLAN (6.27.22 version)



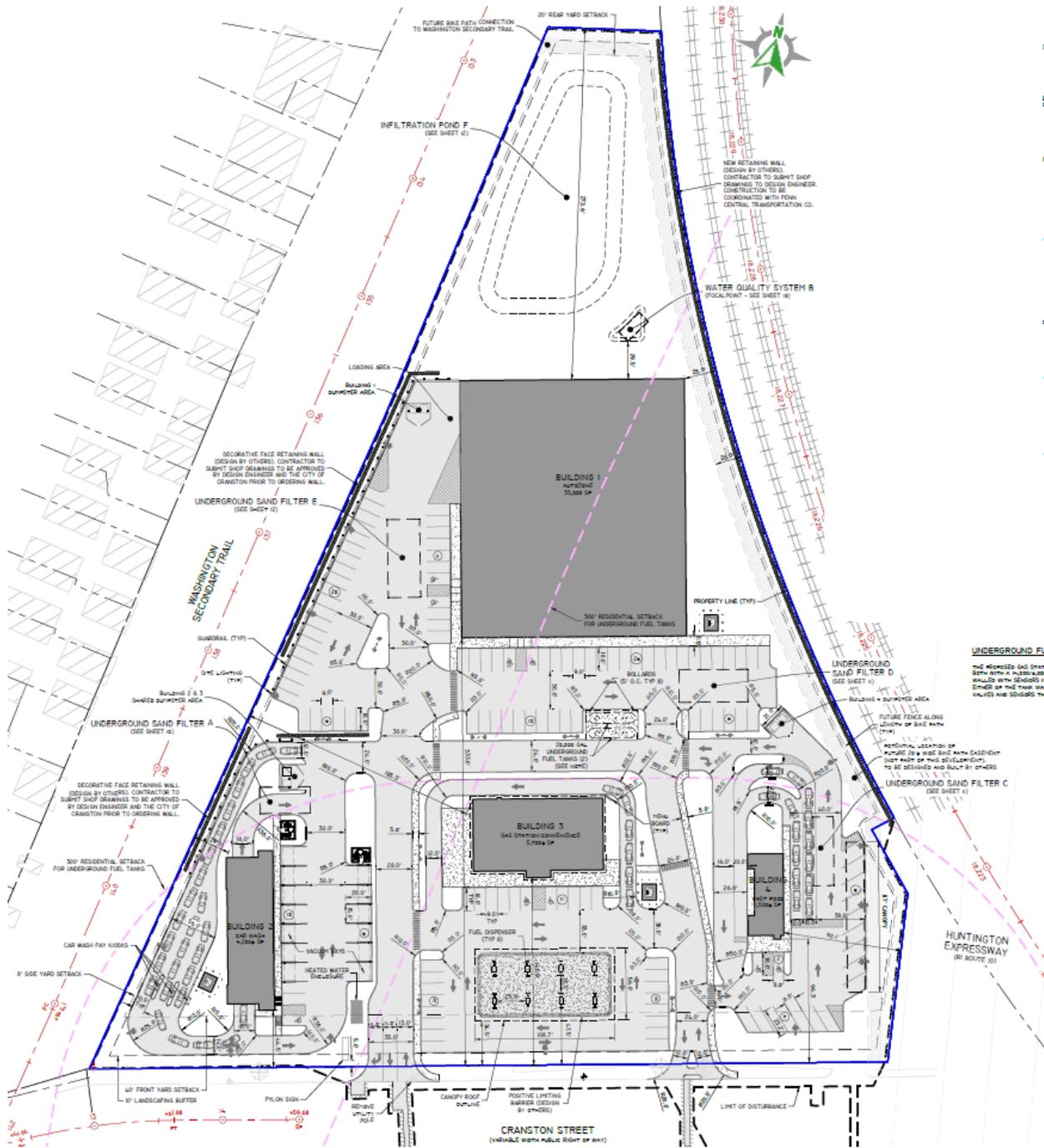
Landscape Calculations

- Landscape Coverage:**
 Total Lot Area (Not including bike spur) 287,716 sf
 Impervious Areas (Buildings, sidewalks, parking, drives, and walls) 187,656 sf = 100,060 sf Landscape Area 100,060 / 287,716 = .348 or 34.8% Landscape Coverage
- Shade Coverage:**
 Total Square Foot Tree Canopy Coverage (30' Diameter trees) 26,788 sf / Total Parking Area 128,282 sf = .209 or 20.9% Tree Canopy Coverage

PLANT LIST				
TREES				
Key	Botanical Name Common Name	Qty.	Size	Notes
AAB	<i>Amelanchier 'Autumn Brilliance'</i> <i>Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry</i>	2	2.5'-3" Cal.	B&B
ARRS	<i>Acer rubrum 'Red Sunset'</i> <i>Red Sunset Maple</i>	22	2.5'-3" Cal.	B&B
CKM	<i>Cornus kousa 'Milky Way'</i> <i>Kousa Dogwood</i>	7	2"-2.5" Cal.	B&B
GBAG	<i>Ginkgo biloba 'Autumn Gold'</i> <i>Autumn Gold Ginkgo</i>	7	2.5'-3" Cal.	B&B
GTIS	<i>Gleditsia tri. inermis 'Shademaster'</i> <i>Shademaster Locust</i>	11	2.5'-3" Cal.	B&B
LT	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i> <i>Tulip Tree</i>	6	2.5'-3" Cal.	B&B
MRS	<i>Magnolia 'Royal Star'</i> <i>Royal Star Magnolia</i>	4	2"-2.5" Cal.	B&B
PSA	<i>Prunus x subhirtella 'Autumnalis'</i> <i>Autumn Flowering Cherry</i>	4	2"-2.5" Cal.	B&B
SRIS	<i>Syringa reticulata 'Ivory Silk'</i> <i>Japanese Lilac Tree</i>	8	2.5'-3" Cal.	B&B
TON	<i>Thuja occidentalis 'Nigra'</i> <i>American Arborvitae</i>	9	6'-7"	B&B
TOS	<i>Thuja occidentalis 'Smaragd'</i> <i>Emerald Green Arborvitae</i>	132	6'-7"	B&B
UAP	<i>Ulmus americana 'Princeton'</i> <i>Princeton Elm</i>	7	2.5'-3" Cal.	B&B

SHRUBS				
JHBC	<i>Juniperus horizontalis 'Blue Chip'</i> <i>Blue Chip Juniper</i>	42	18"-24"	Cont.
VC	<i>Viburnum corymbosum</i> <i>Highbush Blueberry</i>	21	18"-24"	Cont.
VD	<i>Viburnum dentatum</i> <i>Arrowwood Viburnum</i>	20	18"-24"	Cont.
GROUNDCOVERS				
PT	<i>Pachysandra terminalis</i> <i>Japanese Spurge</i>	210	4" Pots	

SITE PLAN (6.23.22 version)



II. Documents which are part of the Major Land Development application

1. Preliminary Plan application;
2. Application filing fees;
3. Subdivision plan set entitled "Trolley Barn Plaza," prepared by Dana Nisbet, P.E. and Robert Babcock, PLS of DiPrete Engineering with dated of 4/27/22, last revised 6/23/22;
4. Landscape Plan by Randall L. Collins, Jr., RLA, ASLA of BETA Group, Inc. issue date "2022" with revised version received on 6/27/22;
5. "Site Development Narrative" addressed to Mr. Pezzullo from Dana Nisbet, P.E. of DiPrete Engineering dated 3/24/22.
6. Preliminary Plan checklist;
7. 100' radius map, list of abutters;
8. Soil Erosion & Sediment Control Plan prepared by Dana Nisbet, P.E. of DiPrete Engineering dated 3/13/22;
9. Stormwater Management Report prepared by Dana Nisbet, P.E. of DiPrete Engineering dated 3/14/2 last revised 4/8/2020 [sic];
10. Stormwater System Operation & Maintenance Plan by DiPrete Engineering, dated 3/30/22 last revised 4/6/22;
11. Water Service Availability Request & Certification signed by Michael DiNoble from the Providence Water Supply Board dated 8/19/21;
12. Correspondence from the Providence Water Supply Board sent to Dana Nisbet, P.E. on 7/1/22 regarding a pending approval of water services.
13. Certificate of Municipal Leans;
14. RIDEM RIPDES permit dated 4/14/22 signed by Nicholas A. Pisani, P.E.;
15. Phase II Environmental Site Assessment Report by Earth Science, LLC dated 10/21/21;
16. Limited Subsurface Investigation by CMG Environmental, Inc. dated 12/3/21;
17. Remedial Approval Letter signed by Jeffrey Crawford of RIDEM's Office of Land Revitalization & Sustainable Materials Management, dated 5/13/22;
18. Photometrics Plan by Christopher Craft of NES (no date);
19. Traffic Impact Study by BETA Group, Inc. dated July, 2021 last revised April, 2022;
20. Revised response to City's traffic peer review memo dated 9/3/21 by traffic consultant BETA Group, Inc. dated 10/4/21, REVISED 11/8/21;
21. Real Estate Analysis signed by Thomas O. Sweeney, SIOR of Sweeney Real Estate & Appraisal dated 11/3/21;
22. Planning consultant report by Joseph D. Lombardo, AICP of JDL Enterprises, dated November, 2021;
23. Site Rendering (no date or author provided);
24. Letter from the State of Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission addressed to Dana Nisbet signed by Jeffrey D. Emidy, dated 3/15/22;

25. Freestanding Sign Detail by Jeff Carter of Poyant, dated 10/21/21;
26. Copy of approved Comprehensive Plan amendment Ordinance 2022-1;
27. Copy of approved zone change Ordinance 2022-2;
28. Letter addressed to Bonnie Nickerson, Director of Providence Planning and Development regarding the bike path connection signed by Nicholas J. Goodier, Esq. dated 5/18/22.

III. Surrounding land use and context

Analysis using Geographic Information System (GIS) and other resources indicates that:

1. The subject parcel is located in Eastern Cranston in the northernmost point of the city near the border of the City of Providence, with frontage on Cranston Street. The property abuts the Amtrak railroad and Route 10;
2. The surrounding area contains a variety of land uses including a range of residential uses, commercial uses, a government/institutional uses (police station), and industrial uses;
3. There is a narrow piece of property directly abutting the subject parcel to the west that is a previous railroad right-of-way that is currently an undeveloped gully owned by the State of Rhode Island. There is significant interest from both the City of Cranston and Providence to explore the potential for it to be utilized at a future time to connect the bike path to the trails in Providence;
4. There are no wetlands or other significant natural features within the 400-foot radius of the subject property;
5. The project is free of any regulated floodplains or historic/cultural districts;
6. The 2018 Natural Heritage Map does not show any known rare species located on or near the site;
7. The site has minimal topography and slopes gently downward towards the north, away from the street frontage.

IV. Staff / Agency Comments

Pursuant to RIGL 45-23-41 A3, these plans were distributed for comment to the Public Works Department, Engineering Division, Bureau of Traffic Safety, Building and Inspections Department, Conservation Commission and the Fire Department. Staff has also coordinated with the City of Providence regarding the future bike path connection (see the Planning Analysis section for further discussion on the bike path connection).

The Fire Department provided the following comments in an email to staff on 6/14/22, *"I have looked over the site plans for 777 Cranston St. Everything looks good. However, the AutoZone building, the Fire department only has access to two sides with our trucks. That would be the front and left side. The backside and right side (facing Providence), we would not be able to access those sides with our apparatus. The building being 200 ft. long, creates an obstacle in itself. This would **not** prevent the project from going through."* Please note that the Fire Department was represented at the DPRC meeting on 7/6/22, at which the DPR preliminary plan was reviewed and approved. The Fire Department discussed this issue in further detail,

and some ideas were relayed to troubleshoot the potential issue. The Fire Department was satisfied with the discussion and voted in the affirmative to approve the DPR proposal (which is identical to this proposal).

DPW provided the following comment via email to the Planning Department on 6/5/22, "*DiPrete Engineering has received a Letter of Findings from Veolia Water regarding the sewer design for the project. There were a number of comments to address (labeling, sewer notes, specifications, potential utility conflicts, etc). The DPW would prefer these items are addressed prior to approval; however, based on the lateness DiPrete received the response we are willing to provide conditional approval contingent upon addressing all comments provided by Veolia Water and the City.*" A condition will be incorporated to address this comment.

The Bureau of Traffic Safety provided the following comments on 5/11/22:

This office offers the following comments relative to the subject proposed development:

- Signalized driveway opening exceeds ordinance maximum of 35’.
- Consider swapping position of buildings 2 & 4 in order to facilitate a “right out only” onto Cranston St. at the western corner of site.
- Re-design driveway opening on eastern side of the site to facilitate “right in only”...consider removing exit at this driveway.
- Truck circulation not shown for bldgs. 1 & 4.
- Drive-thru bypass lanes not provided.
- Dumpster locations not shown.
- Analysis of traffic signal improvements from Niantic Ave. to Webster Ave. be included in traffic impact study with consideration given to adaptive technologies.

Please be aware that these comments were on a previous iteration of the site plan and have since been addressed in the current version on the plans. Confirming such, the Bureau of Traffic Safety conveyed the following in an email to the Planning Department on 7/1/22, "**Major concerns have been addressed with the plan revisions.**"

Pursuant to Master Plan Approval condition #3 and the City of Cranston Subdivision Regulations Section III (C)(9) *Professional Review Fees*, the City hired a professional landscape architect to “conduct an independent review on any and all buffer plans proposed” at the expense of the applicant (see the Planning Analysis section for further discussion on the landscaping/buffering).

Additionally, pursuant to the City of Cranston Subdivision Regulations Section III (C)(9) *Professional Review Fees*, the City required the applicant to pay for the City to hire a professional traffic consultant to review the traffic impacts presented by the project. The city hired Fuss & O’Neill, Inc. for this function (see the Planning Analysis section for further discussion on the traffic impacts and site circulation).

During the review of the master plan application, Statewide Planning verbally confirmed that they would like to see the bike path connections, but as a policy do not comment on land development projects.

Staff has incorporated all comments from parties listed above into their respective subject areas under the Planning Analysis section of this memo.

V. Interests of Others

No comments have been received at this time.

VI. Planning Analysis

Master Plan Approval

The Major Land Development (MLD) Master Plan application was conditionally approved with a 5-0 vote (Mr. Donahue abstained) on December 8, 2021. There were seven (7) conditions incorporated into the approval, listed below with staff's brief analysis.

1. *Prior to submittal of the Preliminary Plan application, the applicant shall obtain approval from the City Council for the zone change and Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Ordinance #9-21-01 and #9-21-02.*

Analysis: The applicant has complied. More discussion on these approvals is included under the "Zoning Compliance" and "Comprehensive Plan Analysis" subsections below.

2. *A Phase II Environmental Report shall be provided along with a remediation plan approved by RIDEM, as applicable, as part of the Preliminary Plan application to the Development Plan Review Committee and City Plan Commission.*

Analysis: The applicant has submitted the required documents and is in compliance with the condition. More information on the environmental issues is included under the "Environmental Impacts" subsection of the analysis.

3. *Under provision of the City of Cranston Subdivision Regulations Section III (C)(9) Professional Review Fees, a professional landscape architect will be hired by the City and paid for by the applicant to conduct an independent review on any and all buffer plans proposed.*

Analysis: The city hired Sara M. Bradford, RLA of Bradford Associates, LLC to review the landscaping plans. She has reviewed two (2) versions of the landscape plans and attended the DPRC meeting on 7/6/22. More information on this is included under the "Landscaping / Buffering" subsection of the analysis.

4. The applicant shall explore the feasibility of incorporating solar energy systems on the roofs of the proposed buildings and parking areas. The applicant shall address this issue in the narrative for the Preliminary Plan submittal.

Applicant Response: *The applicant is in the process of finalizing lease arrangements with parties that will be developing the proposed buildings. Incorporating solar energy systems on*

the roofs of the proposed buildings has been, and will continue to be, encouraged by the applicant. The determination to do so will be made by the tenants. Once the site is developed and operational, the applicant will study the feasibility of incorporating solar energy systems in the parking areas.

Analysis: The applicant has not made any significant progress on this issue since the master plan approval. Staff has raised this issue during the Development Plan Review pre-application meeting on 6/15/22. Here is an excerpt from the approved minutes:

Mr. Berry noted that there was no tangible progress on the issues of EV charging stations and accessory solar energy uses, which master plan conditions of approval mandate that the applicant explore. He asked why the tenants/end users, as opposed to the owner, will be expected to take the lead on researching and implementing electric vehicle charging stations as well as solar carports or rooftop solar. Atty. Goodier said some tenants will construct their own buildings, and as the green energy elements will be supplied by third-party vendors, the applicant feels the tenants are best positioned to determine whether and where to include these elements on their premises. Mr. Berry said that it is preferred that the carports and charging stations be part of the Preliminary Plan phase and asked that if this decision can only be made by the tenants, could AutoZone provide rooftop solar, carports or EV charging stations by the Preliminary Plan phase? Director Pezzullo decided there wasn't enough information to continue the discussion and suggested the Plan Commission could choose whether to make conditions on these issues as part of the Preliminary Plan review/approval.

The applicant has not followed up on the request to ask AutoZone, the only known tenant, to commit to rooftop solar. Staff acknowledges that the condition was not to mandate solar, but to “*explore the feasibility*” of incorporating solar energy systems on the roofs and parking areas. Staff notes that the applicant has complied with the condition in so far as they have addressed the issue in the narrative, however, whether their response is sufficient is at the discretion of the Plan Commission.

5. The applicant shall explore the feasibility of incorporating electronic vehicle charging stations on site. The applicant shall incorporate their findings into the narrative as part of the Preliminary Plan submittal during the preliminary plan phase.

Applicant Response: The applicant is in the process of finalizing the lease arrangement with the gas station and convenience store user. The company has electric vehicle charging stations at other locations in the general area and the applicant is encouraging such stations be introduced at the site.

Analysis: Similar to the analysis of condition #4, staff would like to see more progress on this issue at the preliminary plan phase. The applicant's response does not address AutoZone or the fast-food restaurant. The parking spaces for carwash wouldn't be appropriate as they are really vacuuming stalls. Again, staff acknowledges that the condition does not mandate EV charging stations but was merely encouraging them. Staff notes that the applicant has complied with the condition in so far as they have addressed the issue in the narrative, however, whether their response is sufficient is at the discretion of the Plan Commission.

6. The applicant shall coordinate with the Cranston Planning Department and Providence Department of Planning and Development to connect the bike path, which may include the

applicant granting an easement (roughly 15' wide) in a location similar to Route/Option #2 as identified in the letter addressed to Jason Pezzullo from Bonnie Nickerson of the Providence Department of Planning and Development, dated 10/19/21.

Analysis: The applicant has complied with this condition, as confirmed by Providence Department of Planning and Development. They have designated a 20' wide strip along the eastern and northern property line to accommodate the future bike path. More discussion on these approvals is included under the "Bike Path" subsection below.

7. The applicant shall resolve any potential conflict between the temporary easement in the southeast corner of the subject property and the anticipated easement for the future bike path connection.

Applicant Response: The applicant has confirmed that, as of February 27, 2006, the temporary easement has expired. The pertinent documentation is recorded in the City's Land Evidence Records, in Book 1328, Page 313 and in Book 2535, Page 195.

Analysis: The applicant's response demonstrates compliance with the condition.

Development Plan Review (DPR) Approval

1. City regulations require that all Major Land Development (MLD) preliminary plan applications MUST receive DPR preliminary plan approval prior to going before the Plan Commission. The applicant has satisfied this requirement based on the approval granted at the 7/6/22 DPRC meeting.
2. The DPRC incorporated conditions into the approval, however, the approval letter has not yet been drafted and recorded. Staff will have the DPR Preliminary Plan approval letter available for the 7/12/22 Plan Commission meeting.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

1. The Major Land Development preliminary plan proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, particularly as it was amended by Ordinance 2022-1 specifically for this project. The proposed uses are consistent with the Future Land Use Map designation of Highway Commercial/Services.
2. The Plan Commission found that the Master Plan was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, conditioned to the approval of the associated Comprehensive Plan amendment which was approved. Affirmative findings for Comprehensive Plan consistency for the master plan still apply to this preliminary plan proposal.
3. With consideration of the conditions of approval incorporated for the approval, the proposal is consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan that are not impacted by the amendment, specifically the Economic Development element.

Zoning Compliance

1. The proposal and uses therein comply with all C-5 zoning requirements or conditions incorporated into the approved zone change ordinance (warehouse use and signage).
2. The applicant designed the site as to locate the gas storage tanks 300' away from the properties in order to comply with the City's ordinance, (please be aware that the setback does not apply to the fuel *pumps* which are proposed just over 100' from the residences).

Land Uses:

1. The warehouse use was approved by Council in 2021 through Ordinance 2022-2.
2. The gas station and fast-food restaurant were part of the approved master plan application. Both are permitted uses under C-5 zoning.
3. The carwash use has replaced the bank. Although the carwash was not part of the master plan application, it is a permitted use under C-5 zoning.
4. Staff has been consistently critical of the combination of proposed uses for the reason that they do not operate well together, are all auto-oriented, are not pedestrian-friendly, have the same relative hours of operation so that there is no offset to trip generation or option for shared parking, and require a complex system of internal roadways that results in more impervious surface. This criticism is corroborated by comments in an email from Bonnie Nickerson of the Providence Department of Planning and Development to staff on 6/23/22, as she wrote, "*The proposed uses are all car-oriented, which is not preferable for an urban environment.*" However, despite this criticism, the applicant has the right to propose uses permitted in C-5 or allowed per their zoning approval.

Traffic Impacts & Site Circulation:

1. Please use [this link](#) to locate the traffic related documents including the traffic study provided by BETA Group, LLC, as well as all peer reviewer memos (2 in total).
2. The traffic impacts were also studied and peer-reviewed during the master plan phase. The main difference in the two reviews is that the scope preliminary plan review also included *internal* site circulation, and that impact study was updated to be consistent with the site plan changes and use change from the bank to the carwash. Surprisingly, the carwash has *less* of a traffic impact than the bank due to fact that the trips generated by the use are more spread out throughout the day, therefore less burdensome on the peak hours where the congestion and level of service is of greatest concern.
3. The conclusion of both the master and preliminary plan traffic peer reviews are the same and can be summarized by the following statement made under the "Traffic Impacts" section item #1 in the letter from Andrew G. Glines, PE and Katherine O'Shea, EIT of Fuss & O'Neill dated June 10, 2022, "***We concur that upon implementation of appropriate off-site mitigation, the proposed development will have no significant impact on traffic operations within the study area.***" The off-site mitigation measures are incorporated into the proposed conditions of approval.
4. The language quoted in #2 above is followed by a recommendation that staff supports, and the applicant has verbally agreed to, "***We recommend that the applicant conduct***

traffic counts at the site driveway and other intersections where signal re-timing is proposed during the opening month of the development. This will ensure that any off-site mitigation is [sic] required will be based on actual trip generation instead of estimates.” This is important particularly because the peer-reviewers have conveyed that the estimated trip generation for the project is very conservatively estimated, taking no reduction for internal capture or vehicle pass-by trips. Staff has incorporated the recommendation into the proposed conditions for approval.

5. The City’s Traffic and Safety Bureau initially comments and concerns. These comments were addressed by the applicant through revisions to the plan and/or dialogue to clarify /justify certain design decisions made by the applicant. In preparation for the Trolley Barn Plaza’s Development Plan Review Preliminary Plan application (which is identical to the MLD preliminary plan application), the Traffic and Safety Bureau issued the following statement on 7/1/22, **“Major concerns have been addressed with the plan revisions.”**
6. The majority of the comments from the peer review were regarding internal site circulation and parking. The memo issued by Andrew G. Glines, PE and Katherine O’Shea, EIT of Fuss & O’Neill dated June 10, 2022, included 7 comments in this category and had an attached plan with substantive mark-up comments. In response, the applicant submitted revised plans dated 6/23/22. After review of the revised plans, the peer-reviewer issued another memo dated 6/30/22. The memo acknowledges that “the majority of comments have been sufficiently addressed” and then listed the following comments below. The applicant responded to the comments during the DPRC meeting on 7/6/22 which are summarized in the staff analysis in red.

1. *It is noted that the applicant has reduced the parking from 149 to 140. We also recommend:*

a. *Adding bike racks. Applicant agrees to add to Final Plan. Bike racks can be a condition of approval.*

b. *Closing the curb cut on Cranston Street at the southeast corner of the site, replacing sidewalk and curb, and installation of an accessible ramp to facilitate future bike lane access. Applicant agrees to add to Final Plan. This can be a condition of approval.*

2. *Section 17.28.010(A)(5) and 17.84.150 (A)(2) – It is noted that the applicant has added numerous pedestrian routes to the site. We also recommend:*

a. *Connecting Building 2 sidewalk to the right-of-way, as this will likely be the access point for pedestrians entering the site that approach from the west. The applicant doesn’t believe this is necessary as Bldg. 2 is a carwash and doesn’t think it is necessary for pedestrians to walk through this portion of the site. The DPR committee was satisfied with the applicant’s response.*

b. *Connecting pedestrian route from Building 3 to Building 4 more directly with a crosswalk and sidewalk across the north side of Building 4. The applicant agreed to adding a crosswalk from the southern point of the building due west just in front of the end of the drive-through line. This can be added as a condition of approval.*

c. *Revising the light pole location to the west of the gas station canopy since it is located on the proposed sidewalk. The applicant stated that light poles are typically found in sidewalks, but that they would ensure that there is a minimum of 36” clearance. This can be added as a condition of approval.*

d. Depicting crosswalks across the two entrances on Cranston Street. **The applicant agreed. This can be added as a condition of approval.**

3. Section 17.28.010(B)(4) – *The Fast Food driveway opening (measuring curb to curb) is less than 60 feet from Cranston Street.*

a. *F&O understands that the City will be confirming the reference point for this measurement. The city Zoning Official interprets the referenced section as to NOT apply to internal driveways, but that it only applies to driveways connecting the site to a public roadway.*

b. *If a waiver is required, F&O recommends approval of this waiver because the applicant has designated it as an entrance only, and it is 55 feet from Cranston Street. A waiver is not required.*

4. Section 17.28.010(B)(4) and 17.48.010(D)(7) – *There is one on-site driveway opening that is located within 40 feet of another driveway opening (measuring curb to curb).*

a. *It should be noted that the definition of “Driveway” is a private way for vehicles to move between a street and a location within a lot. Therefore, these Sections are applicable to all on-site driveway openings. The city Zoning Official interprets the referenced sections as to NOT apply to internal driveways, but that they only apply to driveways connecting the site to a public roadway.*

b. *F&O recommends approval of this waiver because the proposed driveway openings are 30 feet apart, and one driveway opening is a one-way (i.e. Building 4 entrance). A waiver is not required.*

5. Section 17.28.010(B)(5) – *There is one location where the proposed driveway width is greater than 35 feet, located on the east side of Building 4.*

a. *F&O recommends approval of this waiver since the driveway width is 40 feet, and 20 feet of that width will be utilized for two drive-thru queuing lanes. The city Zoning Official interprets the referenced sections as to NOT apply to internal driveways, but that they only apply to driveways connecting the site to a public roadway. The applicant made efforts to reduce the internal driveway widths within reason.*

6. Section 17.68.010: *As shown on Truck Movements & Dumpster Details, Sheet 13 of 15, Building #3 Fuel Truck Circulation, loading zone for fuel truck will be located in access drive behind Building 3. It is recommended that the City ask the applicant to clarify how this decision was made. This approach may be acceptable to the City since a secondary route through Building 1 is available, and based on anticipated duration/frequency/time-of-day of fueling. The applicant conveyed that the timing of the fuel truck deliveries is not during normal business hours of the proposed uses. Additionally, there are alternative routes to access all buildings if the fuel truck were to come during business hours.*

7. Section 17.84.060(D): *It is recommended that the two (2) parking spaces in the most southwestern end of the Building 4 parking lot be removed. Vehicles exiting these two parking spaces will be required to back up into the parking lot entrance and drive-thru lane exit/bypass.*

The applicant did not feel that this was a safety issue, but is a situation normally found in urban development. The DPRC was satisfied with this rationale.

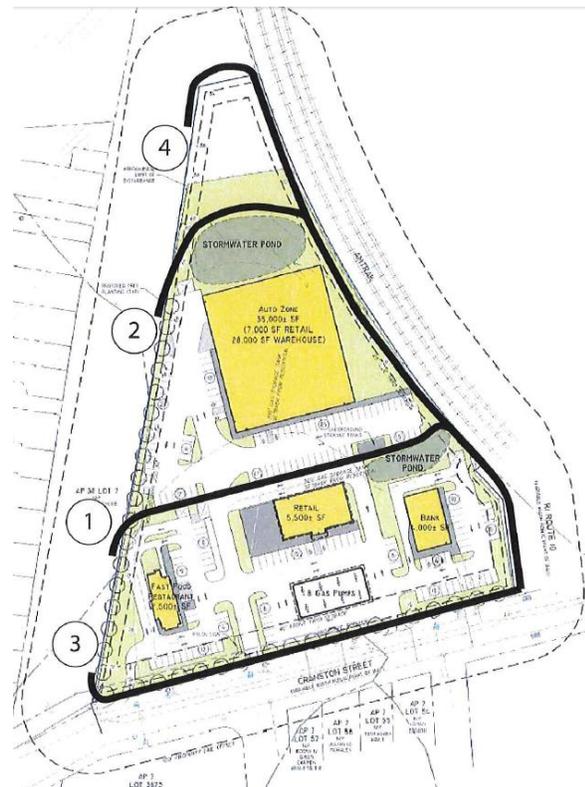
8. Section 17.84.150(A)(4): Provide directional and street level signage. The applicant had no reservation in working with the Bureau of Traffic Safety on this issue. This is routinely handled as part of the building permit process. A condition is not necessary as this is a standard part of the permitting process to come.

9. Section 17.84.150(A)5) and 17.84.140(C): Provide Landscaping Plan to verify sight lines at curb cuts.

a. A waiver from 17.84.140(C)(6)(b)(ii) may be warranted to accommodate a future bike path along the eastern side of the site. The city Zoning Official confirmed that a waiver would not be required as the bike path easement does not convey the property to another party and therefore does not require a landscape buffer.

Bike Path Connection

1. Master Plan condition of approval #6 mandated that the applicant coordinate the bath path connection with Cranston and Providence planning departments. It stipulated that this “may include the applicant granting an easement (roughly 15’ wide) in a location similar to Route/Option #2 as identified in the letter addressed to Jason Pezzullo from Bonnie Nickerson of the Providence Department of Planning and Development, dated 10/19/21.” This is the referenced exhibit:



2. The applicant has complied with this master plan condition. This benefit should not be understated, as the state has struggled to find a solution for the bike path connection for years. The applicant has designated a **20'-wide** strip along the eastern and northern property line to accommodate the future bike path. The site plan has been clearly marked and the agreement with the applicant is to condition the bike path easement to be granted by the owner at the time when the necessary information is available to execute the easement.

3. The bike path future easement location is more aligned with option #4 in the exhibit above than option #2. The reason for this is that the grading around the infiltration pond eliminated option #2 from being feasible. This was found acceptable by Cranston and Providence planning departments.

Off-Street Parking:

1. The site was significantly over-parked, and after revisions the overparking has been reduced. There were 184 spaces proposed at the master plan phase. Now, 140 are proposed and 129 spaces are required. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the site may lose a few more spaces to accommodate pedestrian pathways and landscaping islands. Therefore, the proposal exceeds the minimum required parking per code and avoids being overparked to the degree that staff would recommend it be reduced.

Environmental Impacts:

1. The site is free of significant vegetation and structures.
2. Some grading is anticipated, but the site is relatively flat. The applicant has conveyed that every effort will be made to keep existing soils on site, especially this is related to the approved remediation plan.
3. The applicant has provided numerous documents related to environmental issues on site which are available for review [here](#).
4. The applicant had their environmental consultant Steve VanWormer from CMG, Inc. attend the DPRC meeting on 7/6/22. As these environmental documents are beyond the understanding of lay people, or even non-experts in this particular area, Mr. VanWormer was asked to summarize the environmental concerns and remediation efforts required for the project (he was also asked to be present at the Plan Commission hearing). Mr. VanWormer stated that the soils were contaminated from previous industrial uses, that the contamination was consistent throughout the site, that the main concern during construction will be to minimize dust and air contamination which will be closely monitored, and that the site will need to be capped. He confirmed that this is all within the approved Remedial Action Plan conditions and is under the jurisdiction of RIDEM.

Landscaping & Buffering:

1. Pursuant to Master Plan approval condition #3, the city hired Sara M. Bradford, RLA of Bradford Associates, LLC to review the landscaping plans. She has reviewed two (2) versions of the landscape plans and attended the DPRC meeting on 7/6/22. The 2 memos she has issued are available [here](#). At the DPRC meeting on 7/6/22, the remaining issues that were in Ms. Bradford's memo dated 6/29/22 were discussed and it was agreed that no landscaping waivers were required, the applicant would make final adjustments, the applicant will work with Ms. Bradford before the Plan Commission meeting, and acknowledged that the Plan Commission would have the final say on the landscape plan.
2. To summarize the state of the landscape plan review, it has been vastly improved since the original proposal. The remaining concerns pertain to planting opportunities in the parking areas, the mix of plantings in the western buffer strip, planting opportunities in around the infiltration pond, dumpster and equipment screening, plant material choices and there was a concern raised about pedestrian access. At the conclusion of the 7/6/22 DPRC meeting, all of these issues were trending towards being resolved, to be determined upon receipt of revised plans.

Economic Impacts:

1. The AutoZone is projected to have 20 full-time employees with full benefits and also an additional 20 part-time employees;
2. Tax revenue estimates for AutoZone were requested but have not yet been provided;
3. The other three uses would bring jobs and tax revenue to the City, but the applicant does not want to estimate these values until tenants are secured.

Utilities:

1. Based on internal comments from DPW, the approval of the sewer design will be part of the recommended conditions of approval.
2. The applicant has provided correspondence from the Providence Water Supply Board demonstrating a pending approval for the water services. The applicant will need to complete the approval as part of the building permit phase.

Historic Significance:

1. The site is not in the Historic Overlay District, nor is there any historic structures on site – yet there the property has historic significance evidenced by the fact that it is commonly referred to as the “Trolley Barn site.” As recommended by Chairman Smith during the pre-application meeting in September, the applicant has incorporated historical/Trolley Barn themed elements into the freestanding sign. The sign area was granted as part of Ordinance 2022-2.
2. The applicant has provided a letter from Jeffrey D. Emidy, Acting Executive Director of the RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission stating that “the project will have no effect on any significant cultural resources.”

Energy/Sustainability:

1. Please see the discussion of conditions #4 and #5 under the subsection “Master Plan Approval.”

Hours of Operation:

1. The applicant has stated that AutoZone’s typical model is to open between 7-8 A.M. and close between 9-10 P.M.;
2. The specific hours of operation for the other three uses are not known at this time as tenants have not been secured.

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 notified via first class mail, a display ad 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 Major Land Development preliminary plan proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, particularly as it was amended by Ordinance 2022-1 specifically for this project. The proposed uses are consistent with the Future Land Use Map designation of Highway Commercial/Services.
2. The Plan Commission found that the Master Plan was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, conditioned to the approval of the associated Comprehensive Plan amendment which was approved. Affirmative findings for Comprehensive Plan consistency for the master plan still apply to this preliminary plan proposal.
3. With consideration of the conditions of approval incorporated for the approval, the proposal is consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan that are not impacted by the amendment, specifically the Economic Development element.

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.”

4. The Major Land Development preliminary plan proposal is consistent with zoning, particularly as Ordinance 2022-2 was approved for this project. The preliminary plan is in compliance with the approved ordinance and conditions therein to allow the warehouse use and additional signage. The proposal is consistent with the C-5 zoning regulations not specifically altered by Ordinance #2022-2.

*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)*

5. This finding pertains specifically to the final plan. At this phase (Preliminary Plan), the applicant has provided an Environmental Phase I and Phase II Assessments, Limited Subsurface Investigation Report, a Remedial Action Plan and Remedial Action Plan approval letter from RIDEM, and has had their environmental consultant provide testimony as to the environmental compliance of the project.
6. There are no wetlands on the project site.
7. There is no significant grading proposed by the project.
8. The Rhode Island November 2018 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.”

9. The proposed Major Land Development does not propose any new lots or subdivision.

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.”

10. The subject property has adequate and permanent physical access to a public right-of-way through conforming lot frontage on Cranston Street. The proposed access points have been reviewed by the city’s traffic peer reviewer and Bureau of Traffic Safety.

VIII. Recommendation

Staff finds this proposal consistent with the standards for required Findings of Fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-23-60, the City of Cranston Comprehensive Plan, as well as with the City of Cranston’s Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. Therefore, staff recommend that the City Plan Commission adopt the Findings of Fact documented above and **approve** the Preliminary Plan submittal, subject to the following conditions:

IX. Conditions of Approval

1. All comments provided by Veolia Water and the city of Cranston shall be satisfactorily addressed regarding sewer design. Sewer design approval shall be obtained prior to submittal of the Final Plan application.
2. Bike path easement of 20’ shall be granted to a party to be confirmed by the City of Cranston Planning Department once the necessary information is available.
3. Bike racks shall be incorporated in safe and appropriate locations to be reviewed by the Cranston Planning Department as part of the Final Plan application.
4. The curb cut on Cranston Street at the southeast corner of the site shall be replaced by sidewalk and curb matching the adjoining sidewalk and curb and shall installation an accessible ramp to facilitate future bike lane access. This shall be shown on the Final Plan application.
5. The applicant shall conduct traffic counts at the site driveway and other intersections where signal re-timing is proposed during the opening month of the development (when all uses are fully open for business). The applicant shall convey the results to the City of Cranston Planning Department and Bureau of Traffic Safety.
6. DPW Bureau of Traffic Safety shall review the Final Plan applicant to verify and finalize all traffic mitigation measures prior to final recording.

7. A pedestrian crosswalk from the southern point of the building due west just in front of the end of the drive-through line shall be added and made part of the Final Plan application.
8. All light poles will be located so that a minimum of 36" of clearance is maintained on all external and internal sidewalks.