

Trolley Barn Plaza Landscape Peer Review for the Cranston City Planning Department

Date: June 29, 2022

To: Joshua Berry, Senior Planner

After initial review of the landscape plans for the Trolley Barn Plaza, I responded with several concerns about the landscape plan code compliance as well as other suggestions. The applicant has now submitted revised plans addressing those concerns. There are significant improvements but still some questions.

Parking area landscape requirements (no. 7)

Statements of landscape calculations for compliance with parking area landscaping requirements were provided. Planting has also been added. There are additional shade trees and smaller ornamental trees and arborvitae have been added behind two of the dumpsters. The dumpsters situation would be improved however, if they had a panel enclosure system rather than chainlink and if they were included in larger planting areas and with variety beyond just Smaragd Arborvitae.

It was hoped that there would also be planting associated with transformers, the hot box and other structures, and more extensive planting beds with a variety of shrubs including evergreens.

Buffer strips

Cranston Street buffer. The resolution to existing street trees is not shown. Buffer strip trees located at the property line act as street trees. In front of building 4 at least, there is also space for additional planting- perhaps small trees and/or shrubs.

West side buffer. Buffer planting is now shown as line of 116 Smaragd Arborvitae. Theoretically these could ultimately provide the 8' high year-round buffer required. However, the line of stiff columnar arborvitae is a very different design style than other landscaping. They do not blend with the backdrop of the Washington Secondary vegetated corridor and there will be inevitable die outs. A varied planting including groups of small trees and upright shrubs would be a more satisfactory and sustainable buffer.

Infiltration pond area

Landscaping north of building no.1 is an opportunity for substantial environmental contribution expanding the impact of the Washington Secondary vegetation corridor. Some additional planting has been provided on the most recent plans but there should be a lot more. Vegetation on the banks could be masses or islands of native plantings including trees shrubs (*Vaccinium corymbosum*, *Viburnum dentatum* and others) and herbaceous materials. More appropriate material preferably native, should certainly replace the proposed patch of ornamental day lilies.

Plant materials

The selection of plant materials is generally acceptable, (with correction to spellings) but I would hope that the planting and list can be expanded with more shrubs including some evergreens. Shrub sizes should be larger with viburnum and vaccinium a minimum of 30"

tall. The bluechip juniper groundcover is probably better specified as a #3 container. There should also be awareness that the tulip tree and magnolia are spring planting materials thus limiting the planting installation season.

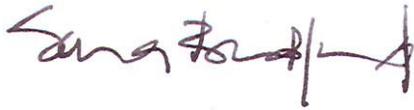
Irrigation is desirable at least to get material established and maybe essential for the tulip trees and arborvitae in these conditions. This has not been confirmed in the plans.

Pedestrian access

Although these are vehicular oriented businesses there is pedestrian activity on Cranston Street and the local neighborhoods that will bring pedestrians into the development. Sidewalks with cross walks have been added within the development. The northern walkway from Cranston Street toward building 1 however, just ends in the parking lot. At least two parking spaces in front of the building should be deleted to receive a crosswalk across the parking lot. That with added planting would also relieve the long line of parking spaces.

The landscaping is an important aspect of the development to help it fit into the area and make an attractive contribution to Cranston Street streetscape. The landscape plans are a good start. Good ongoing maintenance is also essential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sara Bradford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a vertical line extending downwards from the end of the name.

Sara Bradford, RLA