CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Memorandum

To: City Plan Commission
From: Jonas U. Bruggemann, MSCRP | Assistant Planning Director
Date: October 30, 2026
RE: 0 Independence Way– Assessors Plat 37, Lots 859 and 860
"Independence Way Condominium Development" – Major Land Development: Master Plan
File #: PLAN-26-34

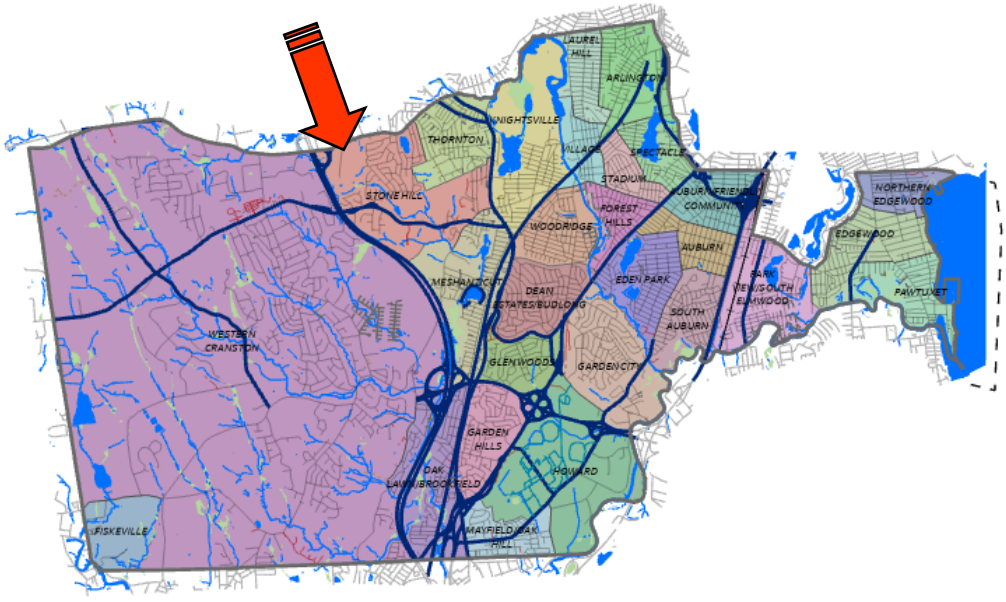
Owner/Applicant:	Summit Capital, LLC
Location:	0 Independence Way
Parcel:	Assessors Plat 37, Lots 859 and 860
Zoning:	C-4 – Highway business (Lot 859) MPD – Mixed-Use Planned District (Lot 860)
FLUM Designation:	Highway Commercial/Services (Lot 859) Mixed Plan Development (Lot 860)
Neighborhood:	Stone Hill

Amended submission was certified complete on October 29, 2026. Approval due January 27, 2026

I. Applicant | Property | Proposal

The Proposal is to construct 54 residential townhouse units which will be divided into nine (9) buildings, each containing six (6) dwelling units. All dwellings will have access to public sewer and water. The total land area of the property contains 8.46+/- acres. Primary access to the site will be from Independence Way.

LOCATION MAP

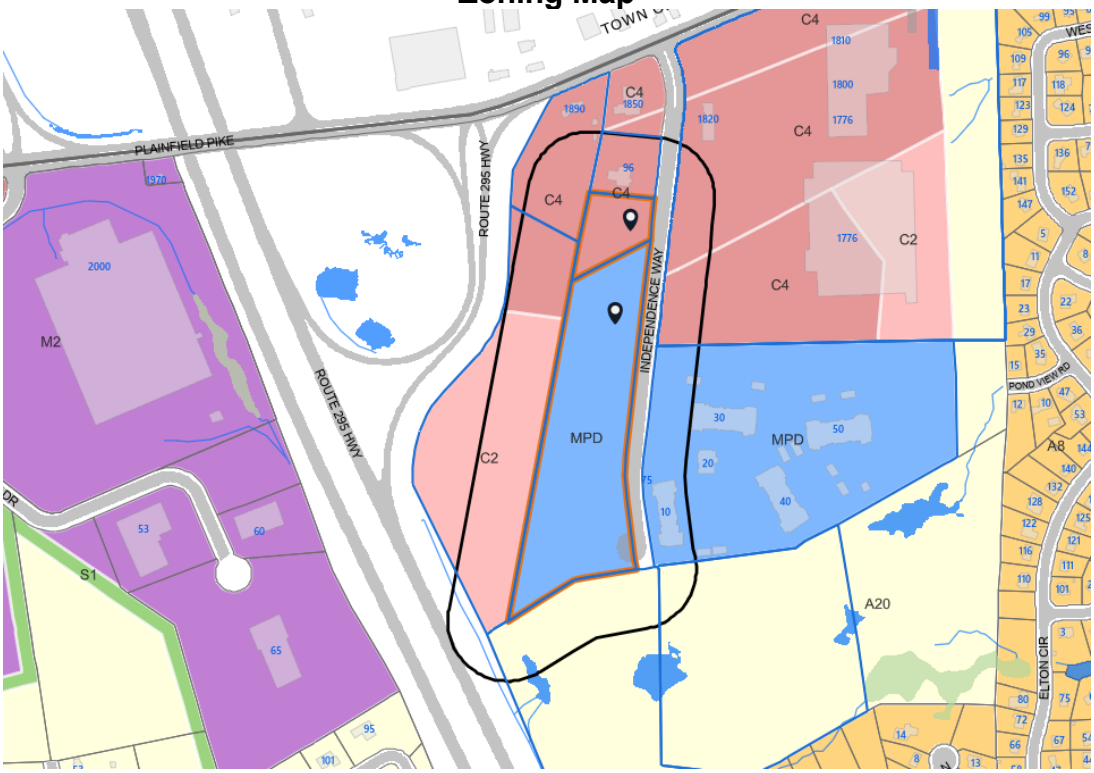


Aerial View

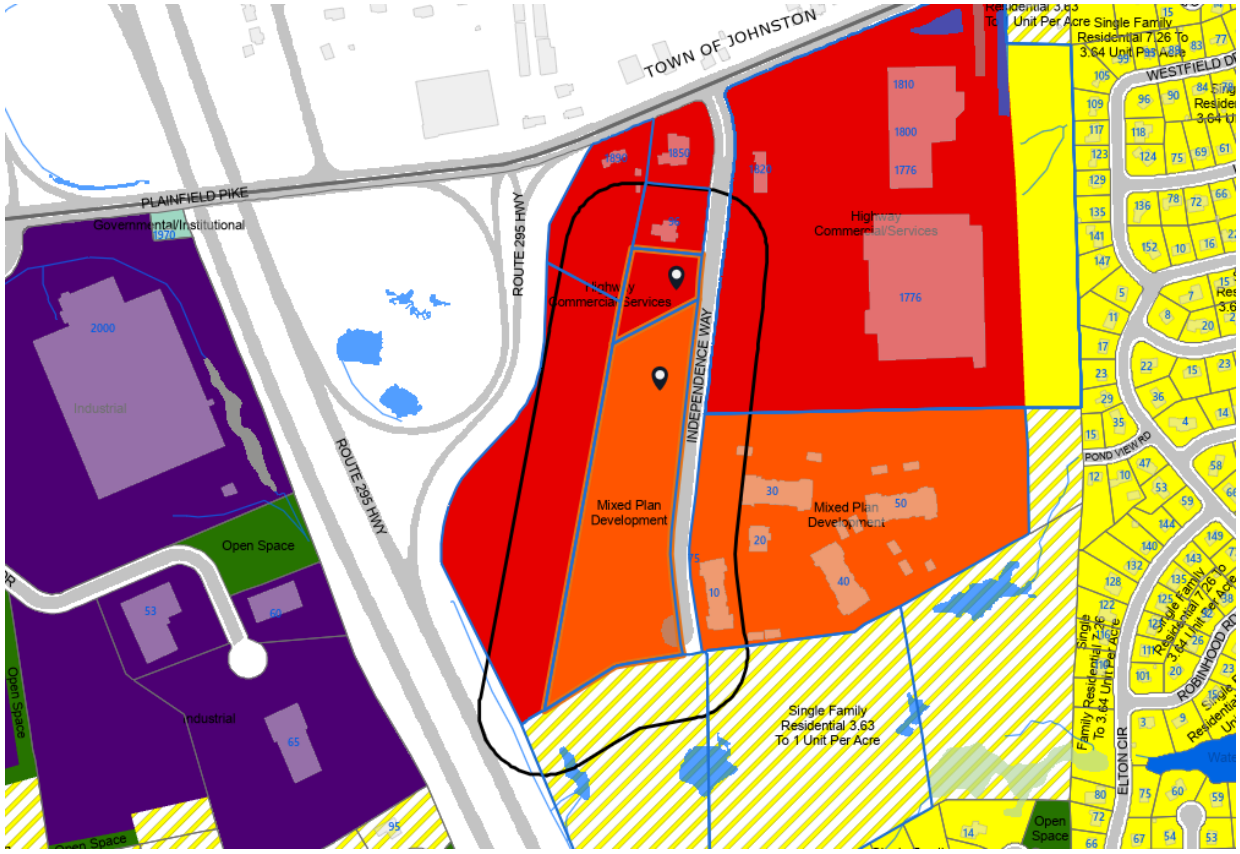


(RIGIS, March 2026)

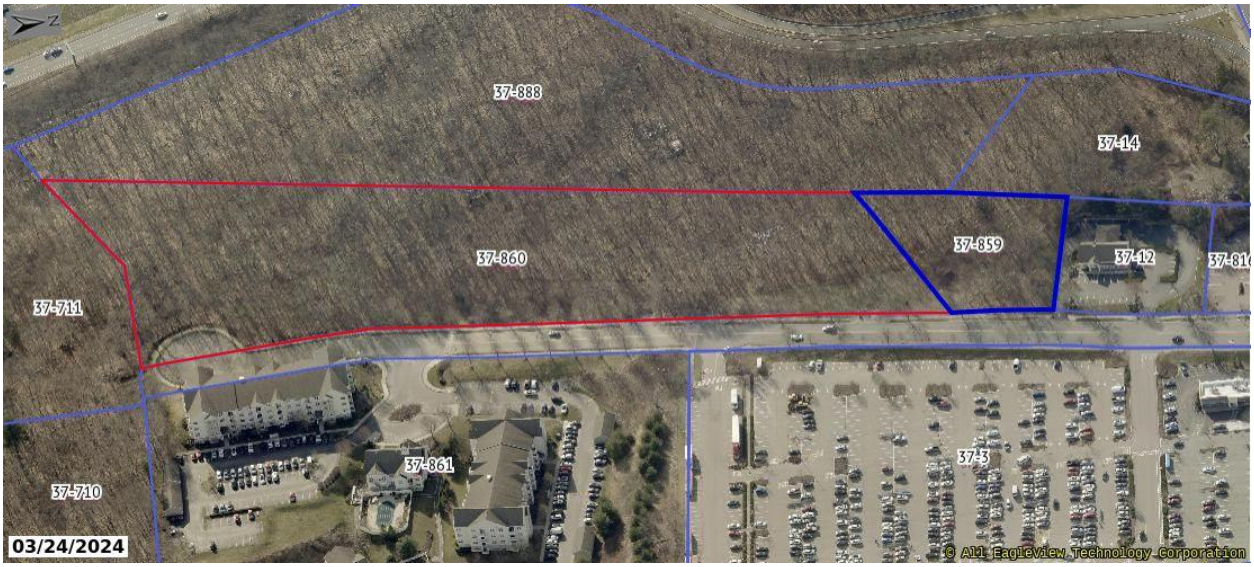
Zoning Map



Future Land Use Map

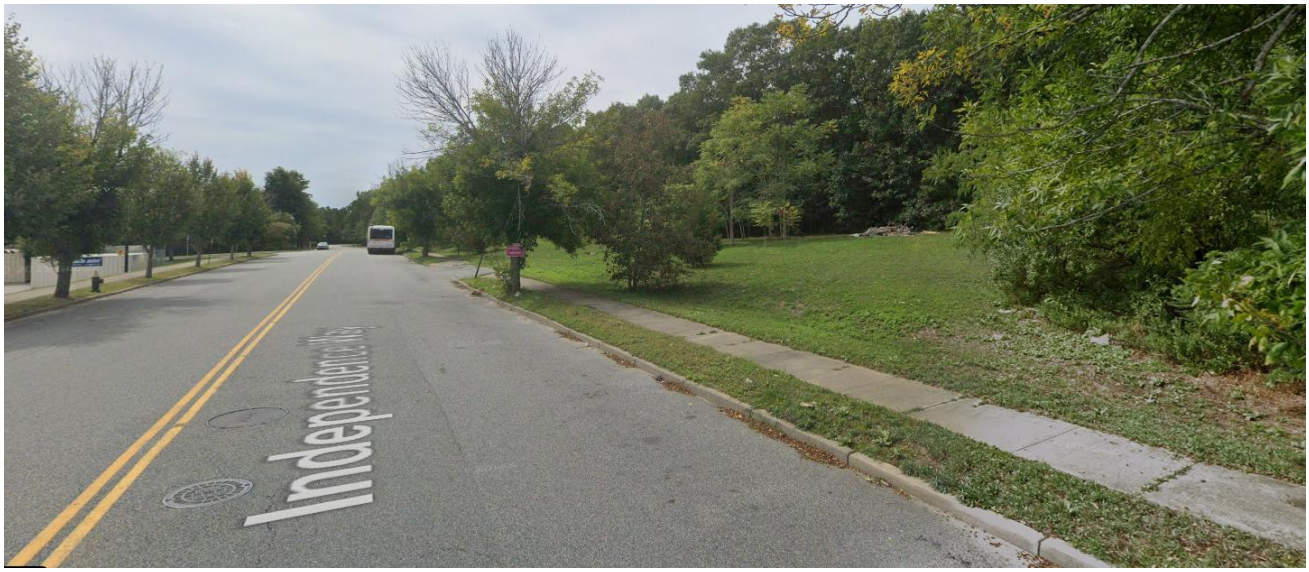


3D Aerial



(RIGIS, March 2024)

Street View



View of northern edge of property from Independence Way (Google Maps, September 2025)



View north on Independence Way. Entrance to Independence Place is to the right. (Google Maps, September 2025)

II. Site Description
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 Stone Hill neighborhood of Cranston with frontage on Independence Way.
2. The surrounding neighborhood is a mix of MPD, C-2, and C-4 zoning districts. Uses surrounding the subject property include residential (multifamily), open space (forested with streams and wetlands), and auto-oriented commercial uses.
3. The subject property is generally quite hilly with steep slopes throughout the property.
4. The southern corner of the site abuts flagged wetlands. The jurisdictional buffer of the wetlands crosses into the lot but is well away from the proposed development.
5. 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.
6. The subject site is located in FEMA Flood Zone X (unshaded) on FEMA Flood Map Panel 44007C0292H. Zone X are areas outside of the floodplain with minimal risk of flooding.

III. Requested Waivers
None.

IV. Public Comment
None to Report.

V. Municipal Review
Pursuant to RIGL §45-23-37, these plans and submitted documents were distributed for comment to the following agencies. In addition to individual reviews, the Technical Review Committee (TRC) held a public informational meeting on September 23, 2026 to review the Master Plan for comment, and a second meeting to review the amended Master Plan on October 21, 2026, as required per RIGL § 45-23-39. Comments are as follows:

1. City Planning Department: Director Beth Ashman requested that the applicant merge the two subjects lots. The applicant can merge the lots through a separate Administrative Subdivision application which should not impact the application for the development.

2. Department of Public Works

    a. Engineering Division: Frank Corrao, P.E., Public Works Director, made the following comments:
        i. The relocation of the crosswalk shall comply with current Accessibility regulations on both east and west sides of the street.
        ii. Close the opening in the sidewalk in front of buildings 7 - 18.
        iii. Recommend all street access to building driveways be developed as concrete driveways per RIDOT standards, given the existence of concrete sidewalks throughout.

    b. Traffic Safety Division: Steven Mulcahy had the following comments

        i. The crosswalk north of the entrance to Independence Place should be moved in a manner which is both compliant with ADA requirements and allows for the shortest crossing distance possible.

    c. Sewer Division: A Letter of Sewer Availability was provided through Veolia Water stating that the sewer service capacity at the West Warwick Wastewater Treatment Facility is

available for the proposed project. A complete design application is required for a final determination.

d. Providence Water Supply Board: Received a letter of water availability from PWSB stating that water service capacity will be made available to the proposed project contingent on the ability of the system to meet demand created by the proposed project. A complete design application is required for a determination.

3. Department of Building Inspection & Zoning Enforcement

   a. Stanley Pikul, Building Official, reviewed the project and had no comments.

4. Fire Department: Armand Niquette, Fire Marshal, and Scott Weller, Deputy Fire Marshal requested that a fire truck turn radius plan is submitted for Preliminary Plan to ensure that driveway entrances are sufficient for fire truck access.

VI. Planning Analysis

Background Information

In 2003, Lot 860 was rezoned from C-2 (Neighborhood business) to Mixed-Plan Development (MPD) for what was intended to be the second phase of an office, retail and multifamily development. The first phase is the existing 196-unit multifamily development now known as “Independence Place” which was constructed in 2006. The subject site was intended to host a retail and office park of up to 48,600 square feet of floor area as Phase 2 of the project (see Figure 1).

Following the MPD process, the zoning map as well as the 1992 Comprehensive Plan and associated future land use map were amended to accommodate these projects (see Ordinances No. 2003-46 and 2003-47).

Besides a few curb openings, a sidewalk, and street tree plantings along Independence Way, the subject site remains undeveloped.

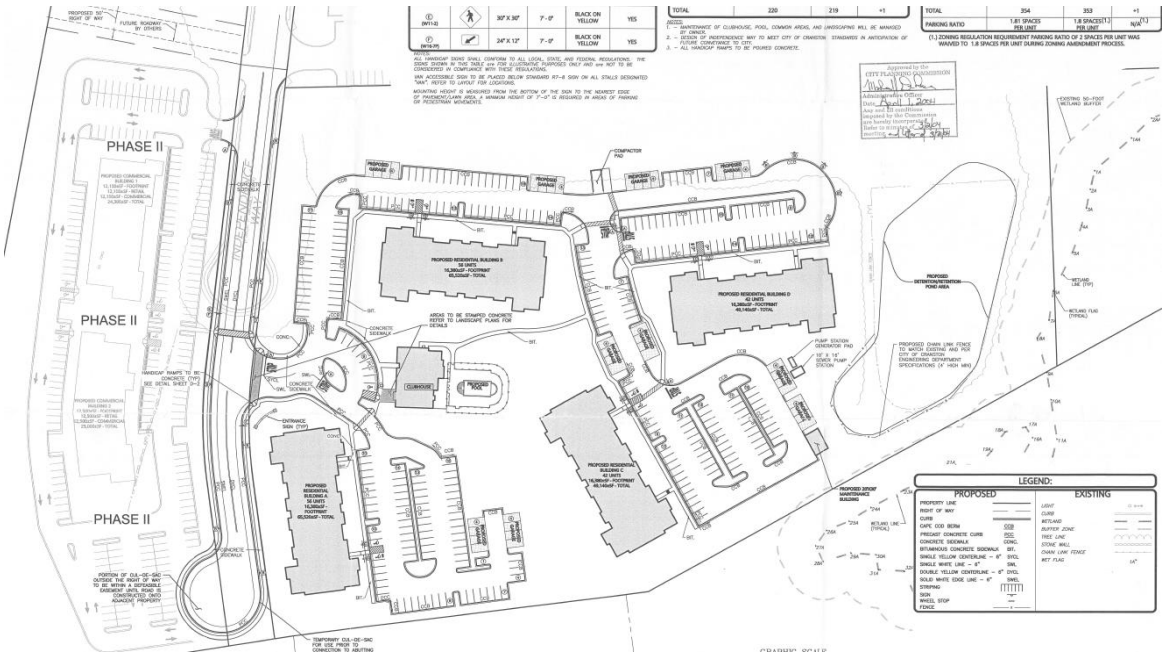


Figure 1: Recorded MPD Layout Plan for Independence Way Phase 1 and Phase 2 concept to the left of Independence Way.

Consistency with the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision & Land Development Regulations

Staff find that the Application is generally consistent with the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, provided that the site is rezoned to C-2.

- The Zoning Map designates the subject property as MPD (Mixed-Use Planned District).
    - The current MPD zoning only permits office and retail uses for the site. A rezone to C-2 would permit the proposed multifamily use.
- The proposal generally conforms to the design standards of the Subdivision Regulations and the Zoning Ordinance provided the information required at the Master Plan stage of review.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

As part of this development, the applicant is seeking a change to the site's Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation. The redesignation of the site from "Mixed Plan Development" to another FLUM designation is required approval of this project as the applicant is not seeking to redevelop the project using the MPD zoning ordinance. The redesignation from 2003 also references changes to the 1992 Comprehensive Plan which is now superseded by the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. The 2024 Comprehensive Plan does not discuss the "Mixed Plan Development" designation nor any FLUM designations generally as the FLUM was intended to be overhauled in Phase 2 of the latest Comprehensive Plan update. Therefore, the 2010 Comprehensive Plan needs to be referenced to find an appropriate designation for the site.

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan identifies both "Multi-Family" and "Neighborhood Commercial/ Services" FLUM designations as appropriate for C-2. Per the Plan, the former "identifies the larger existing complexes of rental or condominium developments" and the latter designation "is oriented towards providing services to local neighborhoods". Provided that the proposal is exclusively residential, the most appropriate designation based on these definitions would be "Multi-Family". While it would stand out in this area which is surrounded by the Highway Commercial/Services and Single-Family Residential designations, it would be more consistent than the other C-2-appropriate designation of "Neighborhood Commercial/Services." If constructed as proposed, the site will be exclusively residential with limited potential to include commercial uses. Therefore, staff believe that a redesignation to "Multi-Family" would be the most appropriate choice for the subject lot.

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan does not deal with this area in any sort of detail, but the goals, policies, and actions do promote housing development, particularly in areas such as this where the development will have few adverse impacts.

The Comprehensive Plan stresses that there is a growing demand for housing and a need to diversify housing stock (Page 5-20). The proposal does not provide deed-restricted low- and moderate-income housing, but it will provide a type of housing that is more affordable for the average first-time homebuyer compared to the single-family detached housing most commonly constructed in Cranston (Goal H-4, Policy H-6). Provided that this area was originally planned to be for much more intensive office and retail uses, there should be more than enough capacity for water, sewer, and traffic to be appropriately managed in this area (Goal H-1, Policy H-1).

While the area is currently open space and there are some steep slopes that need to be developed around, the area is generally a very appropriate area for new development as it contains no important historical or natural features, no prime farmland, and construction will be distant from the wetlands, meaning there will be very limited impact on environmentally sensitive areas (Policy NR-6). The applicant has also demonstrated that the soils are appropriate for development and are appropriate for on-site stormwater infiltration. Given the increasingly limited space for development and the increasing need for new housing stock, the development of this area provides an appropriate trade-off between natural resource protection and growth-related needs (Goal NR-2).

- The Comprehensive Plan outlines goals, policies, and action items pertaining to this Proposal which Staff find support the approval of this Application, specifically:
    - Goal NR-2: Establish a balance between natural resource protection and growth-related

needs.

- Policy NR-6: Direct new growth away from environmentally- sensitive areas such as wetlands, steep slopes, and soils that have severe limitations for on-site waste water disposal.
- Goal H-1: Ensure that future residential development in western Cranston is consistent with the capacity of the area's natural resources and infrastructure, and preserves community character.
- Goal H-4: Promote housing opportunity for a wide range of household types and income levels.
- Policy H-1: Maintain zoning densities that reflect planned municipal service levels and natural resource constraints.
- 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

Historic Features

- None of the lots are located in any local, state, or national historic districts.
- The "Rhode Island Stone Wall Mapping Project" (RISWMP) shows that no stone walls are found in the area.

Traffic Impacts and Access

- Vehicular access to the site will be achieved via 4 new driveways along Independence Way. Independence Way connects to the minor arterial roadway, Plainfield Pike, and dead ends at the southeastern property line of the subject lot.
- There is an existing crosswalk by Independence Place that would end at a proposed driveway. Staff recommend that the applicant moves the crosswalk north to keep the pedestrian connection and ensure that the crossing distance remains as short as possible.

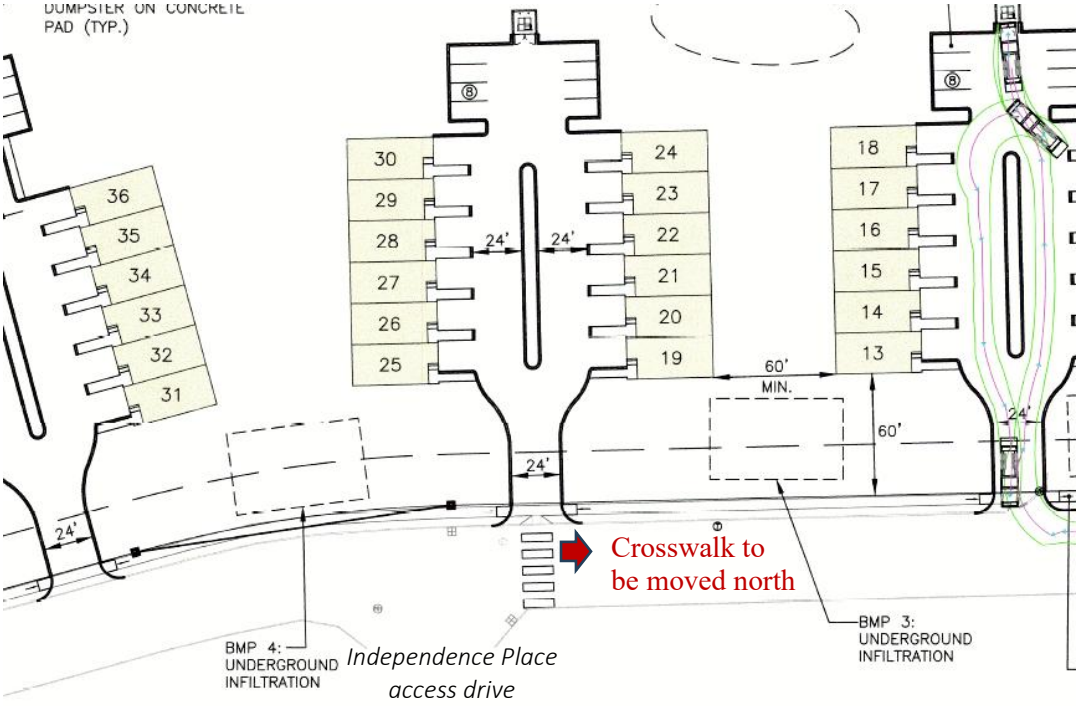


Figure 2: Existing crosswalk to be moved north of the proposed driveway.

- To permit walkup connection to the commercial plaza across the street, a sidewalk connection has already been constructed within the plaza that leads to the sidewalk on the southwest corner of the plaza. To allow for easier walkup access for this development and a likely future development on Lot 888 behind the subject lot, Staff recommend the applicant construct a new crosswalk between the southern crosswalk of the southern plaza access road and the sidewalk by the development in a manner that does not interfere with the access easement on the subject lot.



Figure 3: The red rectangle indicates the approximate location for the sidewalk

- While a sidewalk spans the western length of Independence Way, there are several curb openings that will not be used and will create gaps in the network if they remain. The applicant is required to remove the unused curb openings along the length of the lot and reconnect the sidewalk and curbs to City standards.



Figure 4: The red rectangles indicate the locations with existing curb openings that must closed and the sidewalk needs to be reconnected accordingly

- The current location of the mailbox is only an estimated 15ft from the driveway. While it conforms to our regulations about corner visibility, the location requires mail delivery vehicles to park on the street which may obscure corner visibility of vehicles exiting the closest driveway. Provided that there is enough space to move the mailbox further from the driveway, Staff

recommend that the mailbox is moved at least 10 feet south from its proposed location to improve the corner visibility of the driveway.

- The preliminary plan review will require a fire truck turning radius plan to be reviewed by the Department of Public Works and the Fire Department to determine that the proposed roadways provide adequate access and circulation for private vehicles and emergency services.

Drainage and Environmental Impact

No significant environmental impacts are anticipated provided existing information on the site. The Proposal will be subject to all state and local regulations pertaining to environmental impacts and wetlands. All state and local permits will be required to be submitted as part of the Final Plan.

- RIDEM's Natural Heritage Map shows that there are no known rare species located on the site.
- RIDEM's Environmental Resource Map shows that there are no known prime or important agricultural soils on the site.
- The developer must ensure that no additional stormwater runoff is created from the development. The site plan depicts several drainage areas proposed to manage runoff from all proposed impervious surfaces. Detailed drainage plans will be presented at the Preliminary Plan stage of review. A RIPDES permit will be required at Final Plan.
    - Soil evaluations conducted by the applicant have found that the soils are adequate for site development.
- The proposed development takes place well outside of the jurisdictional boundary of the wetland found near the southern corner of the subject site. The proposal will therefore not require a wetlands permit.
- The proposal will connect to existing water and sewer mains on Independence Way.

Landscaping

- A landscape plan is not required at this stage but has been provided by the applicant.
- As part of the original proposal for the subject lot, street trees were planted along Independence Way. As the majority of these trees are now well established, it is in the City's interest to maintain as many of these trees as possible. The planted tree line ends near the access easement to Lot 888 where a line of trees was planted between the sidewalk and the curb. These trees were looked at by the Tree Warden who determined that they are Green Ash trees. These trees are showing signs of emerald ash borer infestation which has led to significant decay throughout. Staff recommend that should therefore be removed before they become a public safety hazard.
- To create a consistent and unified aesthetic, Staff recommend that the developer not only follow the landscaping requirements but also plant the new street trees to be consistent in spacing, placement, and heigh at maturity with the existing trees. Though we recommend that the new trees should also be made up of a variety of species instead of a single species to provide resiliency through species diversity.
- Staff deem it necessary for the applicant to provide a landscape plan from a certified landscape architect at Preliminary Plan to ensure consistency with development in the surrounding area and to provide adequate shading and buffering for the proposed development. Staff therefore recommend that the City Plan Commission requires a landscape plan to be submitted at Preliminary Plan.

VII. Findings of Fact

An orderly, thorough, and expeditious technical review of this Master Plan has been conducted. Property owners within a 200' radius have been notified via first class mail and the meeting agenda has been properly posted.

Staff has reviewed this Master 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 community plan and/or has satisfactorily addressed the issues where there may be inconsistencies."

- Provided that approval is granted by the City Council to redesignate the subject properties to "*Multi-Family*", the Proposal will be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation.

- The Proposal is generally 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 or has obtained relief from the same, or another provision of this chapter that exempts compliance with a specific provision or standard."

- Provided that approval is granted by the City Council to rezone the subject lots to "C-2", the Proposal will be consistent with the Zoning Ordinance.
    - The proposed use (multifamily residential) is a use by-right in the C-2 zoning district.
    - The proposal conforms to 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). If allowed by local regulation and/or ordinance, 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 physical 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 Independence Way, a public city street.
- The Proposal will not infringe on the access and utility easement for A.P. 37 - Lot 88 or otherwise prohibit construction on said easement.

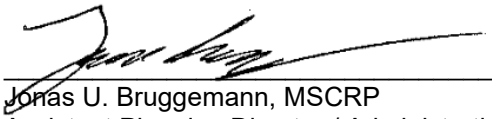
VIII. Recommendation

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 Master Plan submittal subject to the conditions denoted below.

IX. Recommended Conditions of Approval

1. The applicant shall submit an Administrative Subdivision application to merge the subject lots (AP 37, Lots 859 and 860) prior to Preliminary Plan submission.
2. Prior to submittal of the Preliminary Plan application, the applicant shall obtain approval from the City Council for the required zone change and Comprehensive Plan Amendment.
3. The crosswalk north of the entrance to Independence Place shall be relocated northwards to allow for the shortest possible crossing distance and be designed to latest RIDOT standards.
4. A crosswalk shall be constructed across Independence Way, connecting the sidewalk in front of the proposal to the sidewalk to the south of the southern access driveway for the commercial plaza (AP 37, Lot 3). The existing curb ramp may be used subject to approval from the Department of Public Works. The crosswalk shall be designed to latest RIDOT standards and constructed as to not interfere with the access easement on the subject lot.
5. The proposed mailbox location shall be a minimum of 25 feet south of the edge of the nearest driveway.
6. All street access to building driveways shall be developed as concrete driveways per RIDOT standards.
7. Locations for snow storage shall be provided on the preliminary site plan.
8. An itemized bond estimate shall be provided for review and approval by the Department of Public Works for all proposed improvements in the public right-of-way.
9. A lighting plan shall be provided for the site. All proposed lighting shall be dark skies compliant. If streetlights in the public right-of-way are proposed, the number and location of streetlights shall be specified on the plans. If none are proposed, the plans shall state that no streetlights are proposed in the public .
10. A landscape plan shall be submitted at Preliminary Plan. Street trees shall be maintained to the greatest extent possible, except that street trees are dead, diseased, or otherwise considered hazardous shall be removed and replaced in kind, subject to approval from the City Arborist. New street trees shall be planted with general consideration regarding the spacing, placement, and height at maturity as the existing trees behind the sidewalk along Independence Way.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jonas U. Bruggemann, MSCRP
Assistant Planning Director / Administrative Officer