



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Department of Administration
**DIVISION OF CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT
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Cranston Planning Commission
869 Park Avenue
Cranston, R.I. 02920

Dear Commission Members:

As you know, the State of Rhode Island and the City of Cranston enjoy a close relationship regarding land use associated with the state's Pastore Complex providing Rhode Island's citizens with essential government services. The proposal for "Cranston Crossing Development" abuts Pastore and is contiguous with the state's medium security prison system.

Quite some time ago the state was approached by the developer, Michael DiGiuseppe who initially laid out his concept for a big box store on Mulligan's Island, the driving range, and his desire for a new curb cut onto Route 2. Over time, his concept has grown considerably to include franchise businesses to be located along Route 2, while initially envisioning the use of state land for such purpose and, then, apparently, on land controlled by his company.

At all times, the state has expressed concerns about the impacts of such a potentially heavily used development in terms of traffic within the Pastore Complex, the security of the prison, the re-building of the state's communication tower and other issues. As none of these concerns has gained the attention of Mr. DiGiuseppe, we hereby take the opportunity to share those concerns with the Planning Commission as it considers a change in use for the big box store site, as well as the franchise stores:

1. In a desire to clarify (as this concept seems to have a life of its own), the state is not interested in any "land swap" with the developer to promote a more intense use of the so-called Pitch N Putt parcel. In rejecting the developer's suggestion, we have made it clear that this property shall continue to act as a buffer for the prison or, if future need demands it, for the expansion of the prison facilities. The state has never wavered as to this point and our position is consistent with prior statements made to the City of Cranston and its residents.
2. Further, we asked for the existent driveway into the Mulligan's Island site from Howard Avenue to be discontinued and removed if a new intersection is approved on New London Avenue. Arguably, the permission granted for a driveway to intersect the Mulligan Island's site with the Pastore Complex roadway does not envision the expansion of usage as envisioned by the developer. The state perceives any such expansion in a negative light with traffic being bound from Route 2 into the Pastore Complex, with back-up onto the Mulligan Island's driveway, with interference for traffic flow to get to the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Traffic Tribunal, the hospitals, the prisons and other state facilities, and finally the increase of traffic through the campus from Pontiac Avenue. The state does not desire limiting through traffic but it has serious reservations about the traffic impacts that will arise from the developer's plans for property that was intended for low impact usage per the last review by Cranston's Planning Commission of this site when Mulligan Island was permitted to be developed in the first instance.

Adding to the traffic chaos, the developer has stated his intent to build a coffee shop at the corner of the entrance onto the Pastore Complex and Route 2. It is unclear as to how the traffic for a drive-in beverage stand is supposed to work but the developer envisions burdening his current driveway into Mulligan Island for such

additional purpose. Again, the state does not believe that it can agree to the additional burdening of its own entrance to the Pastore Complex.

3. As part of its proposal, the developer envisions an expanded driveway to carry the increased traffic from Howard along its current length. In order to accommodate its additional proposed franchise pads along the sides of the envisioned entrance from Route 2 to connect to its driveway, the plans show that the driveway perfectly aligns with the boundary between the Pitch N Putt and the property controlled by the developer. The state points out that this configuration is not realistic insofar as no part of the Pitch N Putt will be made available to the developer for any purpose such as lateral support or otherwise.
4. It should be noted that no full engineering plans have been submitted to RIDOT for review and comment on the proposed traffic impacts. The record should be clear that, in terms of traffic, there has been no approval of the proposed traffic improvements from RIDOT.
5. In terms of any buildings being built on the Mulligan's site or the coffee shop/franchise pads, DOA has publicly raised a concern about sightlines into the prison grounds and the proximity of the development to the correctional facility security fence. This is a public health and safety concern. The current approved land use had minimal impact to the correctional facilities. This parcel was always envisioned by Cranston Planning for a low impact use. And, the parcel along Route 2, where the coffee shop and the two franchise pads are envisioned was also perceived by Cranston to be a low impact use. Thus, building heights were never a concern. However, with the addition of a big box store, residential units, a coffee shop and franchise pads, the issue is fairly presented. To be clear, the state opposes heights that permit sightlines into the prison facilities.
6. The proposed development includes a small parcel of land owned by the state which houses a RIDOT communication tower. RIDOT has expressed a willingness to let the parcel be incorporated into any thoughtful development consistent with the state's concerns. However, the developer has not presented RIDOT with plans for the location of the tower to be constructed, any path forward to make sure that service is not disrupted, or that the quality of communications remains the same as currently enjoyed, properly permitted etc. In short, the developer is presenting to Planning a mere concept with regard to the telecommunications parcel. Nothing has been agreed to; and, the developer has not moved the ball forward since obtaining the "potential willingness letter" from RIDOT. Of course, any sale or exchange of land by the state requires the approval of the State Property Committee which has not been approached by the developer or otherwise.

These are the "big picture" concerns of the state as it affects land use, traffic and neighborhood security re: the prisons with regard to the proposed development. It should be noted that Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission may also have reservations as to the historic cemetery situated on the Mulligan's site.

In closing, the state believes that the current application should be declined by the Planning Commission.

Sincerely,

Marco Schiappa P.E.
Assistant Director

CC: Brett Smiley, Director, Department of Administration
Fred Stolle, Assistant Director, Division of Legal Services
Allan Fung, Mayor, City of Cranston