

Providence City Plan Commission

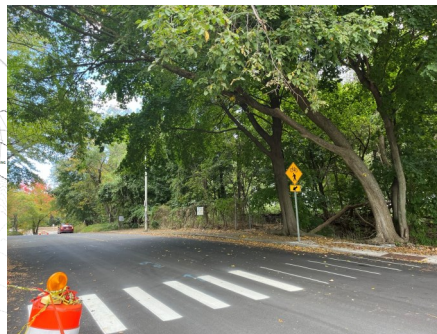
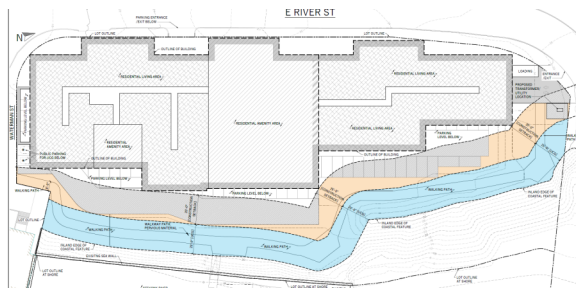


October 15, 2024

AGENDA ITEM 5 ■ 27 E RIVER STREET



Proposed elevation with floor plan



View from E River Street



Aerial view of the site

Proposed site plan

OVERVIEW

OWNER/ APPLICANT:	27 East River LLC	PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	The applicant is proposing to construct a multifamily residential building with 326 residential units and internal parking in the W-2 zone. Dimensional adjustments for height and parking are requested where 75' is permitted by right and 90' is proposed, and 163 spaces are proposed where 326 are required. Waivers from certain preliminary plan submissions are also requested.
CASE NO./ PROJECT TYPE:	24-041MI—27 E River Street Minor Land Development	RECOMMENDATION:	Continue the preliminary plan subject to the noted findings.
PROJECT LOCATION:	27 E River Street AP 15 Lot 483; W-2 zoning district	NEIGHBORHOOD:	Wayland
PROJECT PLANNER:	Choyon Manjrekar		

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The subject property which measures approximately 88,000 SF is vacant and fronts on River Street with the Seekonk River at the rear. The lot is zoned W-2 and the applicant is proposing to construct a residential building with 326 units and 163 internal parking spaces. A dimensional adjustment for height is requested where a height of 75' is permitted but 90' is proposed. A 50% adjustment for parking is also requested. In addition, the applicant is requesting waivers from submission of certain items at the preliminary plan stage including a soil erosion plan, utility plan, transparency calculations, and a signage and lighting plan. The plan is considered minor as no commercial space is proposed.

The site's development is subject to review by the Coastal Resources Management Commission (CRMC) as it is located adjacent to the river.

ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES

Use

The site is zoned W-2, which permits multifamily development by right.

Dimensions and Site Design

The building will front on River Street and address the ascending grade from south to north. Vehicles can access the internal parking area from the lower portion of the slope, with pedestrian access to the first floor provided at a higher grade. River Street curves to the north and slopes downward coincident with the northwest corner of the lot. A dimensional adjustment has been requested for the 90', 7 story proposed height, which exceeds the 75' height limit of the zone. The materials on the façade have not been listed, but appear to be grey brick with black paneling and glass with projections on portions of the building. A waiver from submission of the transparency calculations has been requested. A 25' wide landscape buffer proposed for a public walking path and access to a kayak launch will be located in the rear of the lot, separating the development from the river.

Parking and site access

Ingress and egress to the internal parking area will be provided from E River Street. A total of 163 spaces are proposed where 326 are required. Two public spaces will be located adjacent to the parking area. It is the DPD's opinion that a traffic study should be presented to determine the effects of traffic flow on the street and to evaluate the safety of using the East River entrance which is located on a rising grade. The study should evaluate provision of proper sight distance from the entrance. A loading space will be located at the northwest corner of the lot where E River Street curves downward. The study should also evaluate the safety of this location as turning into the site could be hazardous. The bicycle parking requirement will be fulfilled by locating fifty one bicycle parking spaces in the basement.

Landscaping

The applicant will meet the canopy coverage requirement by employing the planting strip in the rear. A canopy coverage calculation has not been provided but it appears that the applicant will meet the requirement with the plantings in the strip. The plan shall be subject to the City Forester's approval.

Environmental Impact

The applicant has requested a waiver from submission of a sediment and erosion control plan at the preliminary plan stage. A drainage plan that will employ four subsurface infiltration systems in the rear of the site has been submitted with calculations that indicate that stormwater runoff will be improved from existing conditions. The plan shall be

subject to the City Engineers Review.

Waivers and Dimensional Adjustments

The applicant has requested waivers from submission of an erosion control plan, utility plan, transparency calculations, and a signage and lighting plan at the preliminary plan stage. Per the applicant, these waivers are being requested due to uncertainty related to the site's development as the building's design could be affected by the CRMCS review of the site, remediation of environmental conditions and provision of public access. As the building's design could affect the items under review, a waiver to submit at the final plan stage is being requested.

The applicant is also requesting dimensional adjustments for reduced parking and increased height. Access to the parking area, the amount of parking space provided and the location of the loading zone is contingent on the findings of a forthcoming traffic study. The adjustment for the building's height is related to finalizing the design, which could change based on the CRMC's review or findings related to the suitability of the site to accommodate the building.

The DPD finds that the development is eligible for the adjustments pursuant to 1904.E.1.a and h by providing open space for public use and providing structured parking. The request meets the criteria of section 1005.B of the Development Review Regulations as the applicant meets two of the eligibility criteria as discussed above and the adjustments are within the limits of those prescribed in section 1904.E.2 of the ordinance. The DPD finds that provision of structured parking and open space are reasonably related to the adjustments for increased height and reduced parking. The CPC could vote in favor of granting the adjustments, which will only become effective upon approval of the preliminary plan.

It is the DPD's opinion that it would be in the interest of good planning practice to consider the waivers in the context of a fully developed plan and have the adjustments apply upon approval of the preliminary plan. This would provide clarity on the parameters of development based on other reviewing bodies and findings on the site's condition. The DPD recommends that the CPC take no action on the waivers.

Findings—Preliminary Plan

Section 1005 of the Commission's *Development Review Regulations* requires that the City Plan Commission make the following findings as part of their approval of all land development project applications. Based on the analysis contained herein and subject to the conditions contained in this report, staff has prepared the following findings regarding the request for approval of the Preliminary Plan stage:

1. *Consistency—The proposed development is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and/or has satisfactorily addressed the issues where there may be inconsistencies.*

Per the future land use map of Providence Tomorrow this area falls under the Waterfront Mixed Use/ Neighborhood designation, which is intended for a mixture of residential and neighborhood uses serving commercial, open and public use spaces. A development that provides housing with public open space conforms to this designation and to objective H-2 of the comprehensive plan, which encourages construction of new housing.

2. *Compliance with Zoning Ordinance—The proposed development is in compliance with the standards and provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.*

Use: Multifamily development is permitted by right in the W-2 zone.

Dimension: The development requires dimensional adjustments for parking and height, and waivers for which the DPD recommends that the CPC not act on until a finalized plan is submitted. Without granting these requests, the

DPD cannot find the preliminary plan to be in conformance with the ordinance.

Landscaping: A detailed landscaping plan is required at the preliminary plan stage.

3. *Environmental Impact—There will be no significant environmental impacts from the proposed development as shown on the final plan, with all required conditions for approval.*

The drainage plan shall be subject to the City Engineers review and an erosion control plan, which the DPD recommends not be waived at this stage, is required prior to final plan approval.

4. *Buildable Lot—The subdivision or development project, as proposed, 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.*

It is unclear if there are any physical constraints that impact development of this property as it is subject to review by the CRMC prior to development and has to be fully evaluated.

5. *Street Access—All proposed development projects and all subdivision lots shall have adequate and permanent physical access to a public street. Lot frontage on a public street without physical access shall not be considered compliance with this requirement.*

Adequate vehicular and pedestrian access is provided from East River Street.

ACTION—Waivers

The CPC should continue consideration of the preliminary plan and not take action on the waivers until a development plan is finalized.

ACTION—Dimensional Adjustment

The CPC should vote to grant the dimensional adjustments, finding that the applicant meets the criteria for dimensional adjustments in 1904.E of the ordinance by proposing to provide public open space and structured parking, and by making positive findings in conformance with 1005.B of the Development Review Regulations. The adjustments should be granted with the condition that they shall not become effective until a finalized development plan that considers the traffic study and CRMC requirements is submitted.

ACTION—Preliminary Plan

Based on the foregoing discussion, the CPC should vote to continue consideration of the item until a traffic study is submitted and the design of the site and building is finalized.