



CITY OF WARWICK

FRANK J. PICOZZI, MAYOR

February 29, 2021

Premier Land Development, Inc/DNC Holdings
56 Pine Street, 3rd Floor
Providence, RI 02903

State of Rhode Island
Department of Transportation Relocations

RE: Assessor's Plat 322, Assessor's Lots 167-170, 182, 183
1795 Post Road

Dear Applicant:

The following is the decision on your application for Master Plan Approval of a Major Land Development Project with Subdivision and Zone Change heard by the Warwick Planning Board at the regularly scheduled meeting held on July 13, 2022.

The applicant is proposing to create two-new lots to support a commercial building of 5,040 Square Feet with associated parking. The proposed use is to be a bank with drive-through and an additional retail tenant. There is a total of 26 proposed parking spaces on site. The main access is proposed from an upgraded signal with curb-cut at the Post Road and Airport Road intersection. An additional two-way access point is also proposed for Guilford Avenue. No access is proposed for Pell Avenue.

After completion of the Public Hearing, for which notice was served and a record was kept, the Warwick Planning Board taking into consideration its knowledge and expertise, and after considering all of the representations and presentations made at the Public Meeting, found this proposal to be generally consistent with RIGL Section 45-23-30 *General Purposes of Land Development and Subdivision Review Ordinances, Regulations and Rules*, and Article 1 *Purposes and General Statements* of the City's Development Review Regulations, and Subdivision of Land, specifically, RIGL Sections 45-23-60, *Procedure – Required Findings*, as follows:

1. That the proposal is generally consistent with the *City of Warwick, Comprehensive Plan 2033*, or must satisfactorily address issues where there may be inconsistencies, as follows:
 - a. A stated land use issue/concern relating to traffic on Airport Road in *Chapter 12, Section J*, of the *Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use, Zoning and Urban Design* element is the "potential traffic impacts of future development or redevelopment." Additionally *Chapter 9 Transportation and Circulation* (9.9 narrative) notes that the Airport Road/Post Road intersection have lane groups that operate at a Level of Service (LOS) E or F during the morning or evening peak hours. It also further identifies the intersection as one of the fifty-most dangerous in the State in 2011. Planning staff remain concerned about potential lane delays associated with the proposed development, and the resulting impact on the Airport Road and Post Road intersection.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT • THOMAS KRAVITZ, DIRECTOR
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Additional concerns include traffic circulation impacts on Guilford Avenue where an existing curb cut is proposed to remain. The applicant therefore needs to perform additional analysis to determine traffic impacts the new use will have on nearby roadways and propose appropriate mitigation measures as prescribed by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, in accordance with their Physical Alteration Permit, in order to maintain consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

- b. The project involves the redevelopment of a highly-visible, vacant and dilapidated property that is in need of reinvestment. The applicant is proposing to completely renovate the site with substantial improvements to the overall site layout, landscaping, stormwater management, and signage. *Chapter 12* of the *Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use, Zoning and Urban Design* element states that 60 percent of Comprehensive Plan survey respondents indicated that improving the appearance of major roads and commercial corridors is "very important." The project is consistent with this Comprehensive Plan element, provided the landscaping, signage, and building features conform to all current zoning requirements or required relief is granted.
- c. A stated policy in *Chapter 12* of the *Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use, Zoning and Urban Design* element is to "ensure that proposed new residential, business and industrial uses are compatible with the character and surrounding area," and the *General Principles to Guide Future Land Use* includes a policy to "Limit commercial intrusion into residential neighborhoods" (12.15). The proposed project parcel is located along the heavily traveled Post Road commercial corridor and also directly abuts a densely-developed residential neighborhood. The project proposes a rezoning of several parcels of land from residential (A7) to a commercial zone (Gateway). Planning staff remain concerned about the visual impact of the building and its lighting; and traffic and circulation impacts from the project on the residential roadways. To address these concerns and to maintain consistency with the Comprehensive Plan the applicant is proposing mitigation measures that include: landscape screening and buffering; shielded lighting and protection of land for buffering. The project is therefore consistent with this element of the Comprehensive Plan provided adequate landscaping and buffering is provided to minimize impacts on the neighborhood.
- d. *Chapter 4, Natural Resources* section of the Comprehensive Plan states as a goal that Warwick's natural resource systems, sensitive water resources and natural habitats be preserved and protected for future generations, with a companion policy to "protect, preserve and enhance natural resource areas adjacent to developed or potentially developed areas." The Applicant must incorporate appropriate measures to mitigate stormwater runoff, provide pretreatment and TSS removal, and other best management practices (BMP's) in order to maintain consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
- e. *The City Centre Warwick Master Plan (aka "Warwick Station Development District") Land Use Guidelines (p31)* states that "A balanced mix of land uses will be an important component of successful redevelopment of the area. Mixed-use development will help keep the area active and safe during evening as well as daytime hours, help it serve a wide variety

of people, and allow development some flexibility to follow market opportunities.” The proposed, mixed-use development is consistent this element of the Comprehensive Plan.

- f. The *City Centre Warwick Design Guidelines* identifies this parcel as being located in Character Area 2 which is defined as a “Perimeter Area” which is “an area that promotes a range of uses that accommodate cars while still encouraging pedestrian activity and an area that allows more flexible building forms than the (Intermodal) Core” and finds that one–story buildings are allowed in Perimeter areas (p12). The CCW Design Manual further states that Gateway areas “are to be developed to respond to the character of the architecture they frame.” The proposed development is consistent with the Design Guidelines as the project has been designed to balance the need for redevelopment and commercial expansion with a suitable, one-story, mixed-use building that serves the neighborhood and functions as a properly located commercial use along the busy Post Road corridor.
 - g. *Chapter 13* of the Comprehensive Plan, *Stewardship and Implementation* states a Goal and Policy (3.A), “City Centre Warwick is a major center of compact, higher-density transit oriented development,” and that “private development in City Centre Warwick is designed based on the master plan.” Future phases of this project must be shown to be designed in accordance with the City Centre Warwick Design Manual in order to remain consistent with this element of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. That the proposal is not in compliance with the standards and provisions of the City’s Zoning Ordinance in consideration of the following:
 - a. The subject parcel is located within a Gateway (G) Zoning District and a single-family residential (A7) zoning district and therefore a City Council zone change is required to rezone the majority of the lot to Gateway.
 - b. (505.1B) 10’ Landscape buffer variance is being sought for Landscape buffer along Pell and Guilford with 10’ of landscaping proposed.
 - c. Table 2B: Dimensional Regulations: footnote 2; A commercial building or use shall be set back a minimum of 40’ from an abutting residential or Open Space District. Relief is sought to allow 20’.
 3. That there will be no significant negative environmental impact from the proposed development on the final plan provided the project meets requirements contained in the RIDEM Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual (latest edition), all required permits from RIDEM are obtained, the applicant conforms to all conditions of approval, and appropriate mitigation measures are put in place to maintain consistency with the Comprehensive Plan in future review phases.
 4. That the development, 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 in consideration of the following:
 - a. The applicant is proposing to create 2 new lots; one lot for the proposed development and an additional lot not for development.
 5. That the proposed development possesses adequate and permanent access to a public street in consideration of the following:

- a. The Applicant has presented a Traffic Impact Study (Beta) that included a review of recent developments that would impact the intersection, those being the I95 Gateway Project (Commerce Drive); and 1776 Post Road (Neon Marketplace). The conclusion of the TIS operational analysis was that *“the estimated increase in traffic during the peak periods resulting from the proposed commercial redevelopment project will have a minor effect on overall traffic operations along Post Road and Airport Road in the project area with the recommended driveway and phasing/timing modifications.”*
- b. Prior to Preliminary Plan, the traffic impact study should also review the recently approved conversion of the former hotel located at 1850 Post Road to 238 residential apartments and the proposed 200 apartment units at 2119 Post Road. Any additional lane delays should be noted.
- c. The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) finds the project to meet the design regulations of the State of Rhode Island by authorizing the issuance of a Physical Alteration Permit.

ZONE CHANGE FINDINGS

In addition to the above findings, the Planning Board finds the proposed zoning amendment to be generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan (as detailed above) of the City of Warwick and finds it also to be consistent with the following purposes of the City’s Zoning Ordinance, as presented in Section 100, “Title and Purpose.”

- 103.1 Promote the public health, safety and general welfare of the City.
- 103.2 Provides for a range of uses and intensities of use appropriate to the character of the City and reflect current and future needs.
- 103.3 Provides for orderly growth and development, which recognizes:
 - A.) The goals and patterns of land use contained in the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Warwick.
 - E.) The availability and capacity of existing and planned public and/or private services and facilities;
 - F.) The use of innovative development regulations and techniques.
- 103.10 Promote a high level of quality in design in the development of private and public facilities.
- 103.11 Promote the implementation of the Warwick Comprehensive Community Plan, as amended.

Based on the foregoing findings of fact, on a motion by XX, seconded by XX, the Warwick Planning Board voted X in favor to grant Conditional Master Plan approval. With zone change and design waiver for signage

The Planning Board’s approval included the following stipulations:

1. That all Plans shall comply with "Rules and Regulations for Professional Land Surveying in the State of Rhode Island", effective date November 25, 2015.

2. That the Applicant shall submit a Preliminary Land Development Plan that complies with Appendix C, Final Application, of the City's Development Review Regulations Governing Subdivisions, Land Development Projects, and Development Plan Review, last amendment dated March 14, 2001.
3. That a Storm Water Management Plan shall be submitted in accordance with the Rhode Island Storm Water Design and Installation Standards Manual, dated December 2010, that is designed to demonstrate zero-net rate of runoff from the proposed development.
4. That the site design for the Preliminary review phase include areas adequate for snow storage and/or develops a practical method of removal and disposal of snow.
5. That an Operation and Maintenance Plan for the proposed stormwater collection system be included with the Preliminary submission to the Planning Department.
6. That the Traffic Impact Study be updated to include in its review and operational analysis:
 - a. The recently approved conversion of the former hotel located at 1850 Post Road to 238 residential apartments and the proposed 200 apartment units at 2119 Post Road.
 - b. The impact of the proposed project on Pell Avenue and Guildford Avenue.
7. That the Project Engineer shall meet/review with the City of Warwick DPW engineering staff to review the proposed drainage system and traffic impact report documents prior to submission to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) or RIDOT.
8. That RIDOT finds the proposed curb-cut and modifications to meet the State of Rhode Island Design Regulations by authorizing the issuance of a Physical Alteration Permit. Preliminary Plan submission shall include the authorization and a plan detailing all RIDOT Design requirements and signal/intersection modifications.
9. That an adequate number of fire hydrants be provided throughout the development spaced 300 Ft. apart and providing a minimum of 1000 GPM. Sprinklered buildings require a hydrant within 100 Ft. of the Fire Department Connection (FDC). In addition, the Fire Department shall review all plans for compliance with all life safety codes and issues.
10. That the Applicant shall comply with all of applicable requirements of the Warwick Sewer Authority (WSA), including the Collection, Industrial/Commercial Pretreatment and Billing Departments. Prior to demolition of the existing building the developer shall obtain a WSA Demolition Permit and have an inspector present at the cutting and capping of the line. Prior to reconnection, a WSA Connection Permit is required and an inspector shall be present to witness the connection.
11. Any current water or fire service not to be reused, must be cutoff at the water main. Any services that will be utilized again in the future must be cut and whip installed at the curb stop before the Water Division will authorize a demolition permit.

12. That the Preliminary phase submission include a landscape plan prepared by a registered landscape architect, approved by the City's Landscape Coordinator, that meets all requirements under Section 505 of the City's Zoning Ordinance and the *City Centre Warwick Design Manual* and includes the following:
 - a. A solid fence, berm, with a contiguous evergreen planting buffer or similar structure shall be installed along residential abutting areas to clearly denote and separate land uses as well as mitigate nuisances likely to occur such as migrating trash, fertilizer, or unauthorized storage.
 - b. Landscape enhancements, including hardscape and ornamental fencing along the Post Road frontage. Landscape Plan shall include a re-facing treatment or removal of the existing curb wall along the Post Road frontage.
 - c. Pedestrian elements as feasible and in accordance with the CCW Design Manual.
13. That the Preliminary Plan submittal include a photometric site plan, and specifications for all exterior lighting. Site lighting shall be Dark Sky compliant, to the extent practicable. All exterior lighting and signage shall be designed to minimize negative impacts on neighboring properties. Glare from outdoor lights, signs, and from the movement of vehicles on site shall be shielded from the view of adjacent properties with attention paid to houses along Guildford Avenue.
14. That the Preliminary Plan submittal shall include a signage plan that is consistent with the City Centre Warwick Design Manual. Internally illuminated signage will only be considered if the proposed sign(s) are found to be generally consistent with the City Centre Warwick Design Manual. Any proposed freestanding sign shall be monument style and shall not obstruct views exiting or entering the property or obstruct views from the adjacent roadways.
15. That, as part of the Preliminary phase submission, the Applicant shall provide a summary of business operations noting the hours of operation, shift changes, timing of typical peak traffic flow, and any other relevant information for all proposed tenants at that time.

Sincerely,

Philip Slocum, Chair
Warwick Planning Board