

Providence City Plan Commission

January 24, 2022



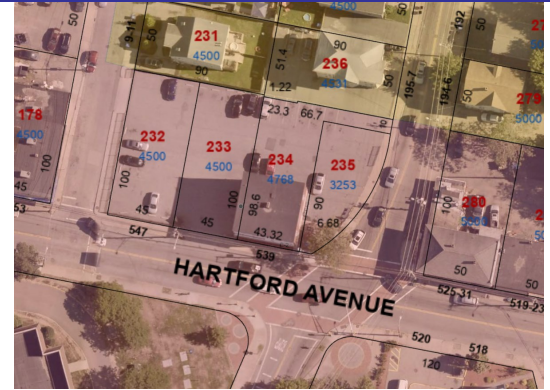
AGENDA ITEM 5 ■ 541 HARTFORD AVE



Building rendering



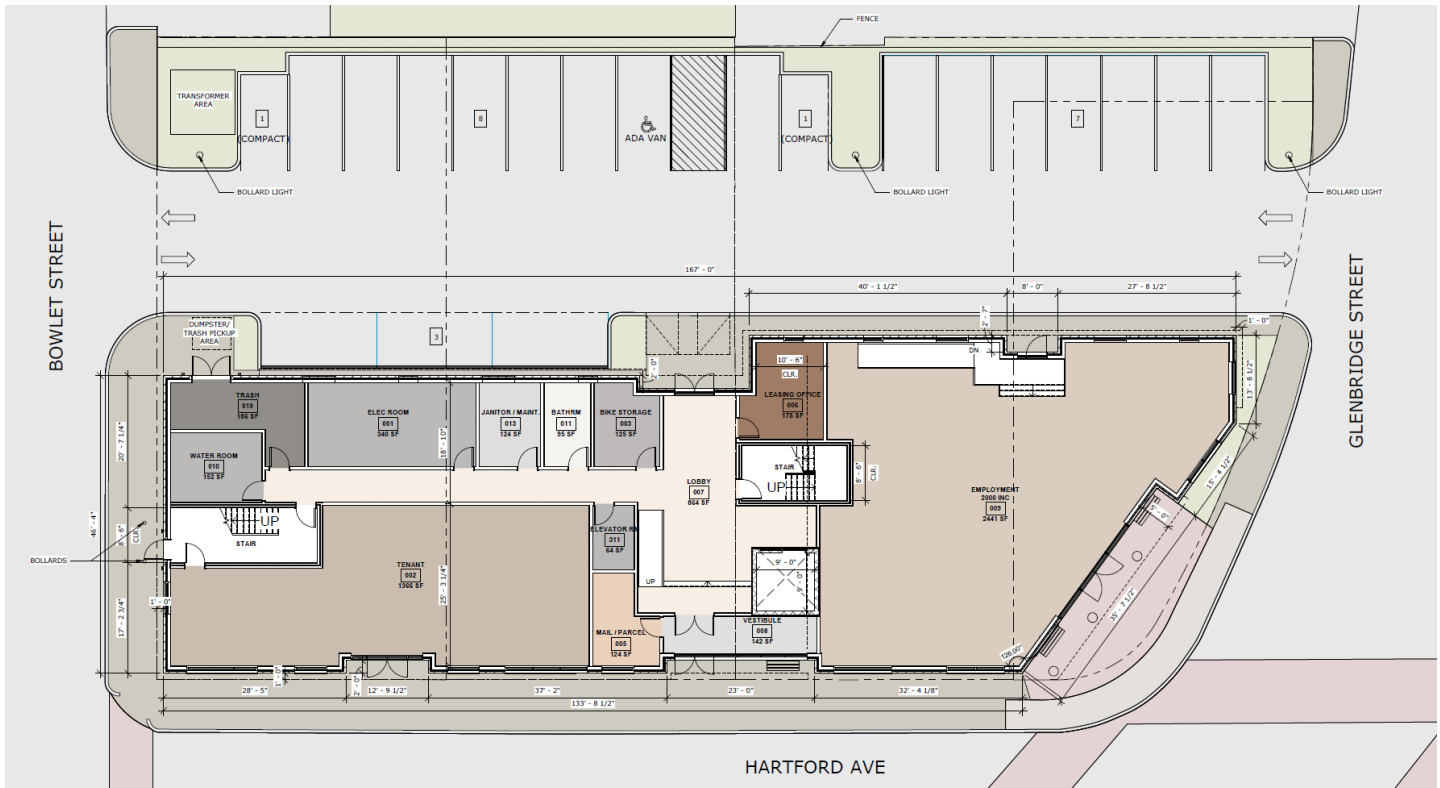
View from Hartford Ave



Aerial view of the site

OVERVIEW

OWNER/ APPLICANT:	E 2000 LLC, Applicant and Owner	PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	The applicant is requesting combined master and preliminary plan approval to construct a four story, mixed-use development with commercial use on the ground floor and 30 dwelling units on the upper stories in the C-2 zone. In addition to design waivers for the width of the entries and the side yard build-to zone requirement, a dimensional adjustment for parking is requested where 33 total spaces are required but 20 will be provided. A waiver from submission of state approvals at the preliminary plan stage is also requested.
CASE NO./ PROJECT TYPE:	22-069 MA Master and Preliminary Plan		
PROJECT LOCATION:	541 Hartford Ave (AP 113 Lots 232,233,235,244) C-2 zoning district	RECOMMENDATION:	Approval of the Master and Preliminary Plan subject to the noted findings
NEIGHBORHOOD:	Hartford	PROJECT PLANNER:	Choyon Manjrekar



Site plan with ground floor

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The applicant is requesting to combine master and preliminary plan approval to construct a four story mixed-use development with commercial/office uses on the ground floor, and 30 residences on the three upper stories in the C-2 zone. A dimensional adjustment for parking is requested where a total of 33 spaces are required and 20 will be provided. The applicant is also requesting design waivers from the width of recessed entries, the build-to percentage of the side lot line and a waiver from submission of state approvals at the preliminary plan stage.

ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES

Use

The subject lots are zoned C-2 where mixed use consisting of retail, office use and multifamily development is permitted by right.

Dimensions and site design

The building will be located at the corner of Hartford and Glenbridge Avenues, with the side lot line on Glenbridge Ave curving outward from the intersection with Hartford Ave. The development is currently composed of four lots and will measure approximately 17,021 SF upon merging. Approximately 31,081 SF of gross floor area is proposed. The proposed height of 47' and four stories is within the 50' four story height limit of the zone.

The existing building which is used as an employment center will be demolished. Hartford Ave will be designated the front yard, providing direct pedestrian access to the commercial and residential areas, with the building set to the front and side lot lines. Encroachment permits will be required for the building footings and for canopies that will project over the sidewalk.

The employment center will be accessible from Glenbridge Ave. The applicant has requested design waivers from the requirement that building entryways be no wider than eight feet, and from the 40% build-to percentage on the corner side lot line. Entrance widths of approximately 13' and 23' are proposed for the building on Hartford Ave and a width of approximately 36' is proposed for the Glenbridge Ave entrance.

Parking will be located in the rear yard with two-way movement provided from Bowlet Street and Glenbridge Ave. A total of 33 spaces are required but 20 will be provided, for which the applicant has requested a dimensional adjustment. The transformer will be located in the rear yard and accessible from Bowlet Street.

The employment center, a retail space, leasing office, mechanical equipment and trash collection area will be located on the ground floor. Thirty units will be located on the three upper stories with nine one-bedroom units and one two-bedroom unit on each floor. Based on provided plans, the building will conform to the design guidelines for multifamily development outlined in Section 1202 K of the ordinance. The design meets this requirement by employing varying, but consistent treatments for the exterior with projections on the façade on all frontages. Brick and glass will mainly be employed on the ground floor with blue hardie lap siding and wood siding used for projections over grey hardie panel on the upper stories. All listed materials are permitted by right in the C-2 zone. Over 50% of transparency will be provided on the ground level with over 10% of transparency on the upper stories.

Dimensional adjustment—Parking

A total of 33 parking spaces are required, of which three are required for the commercial uses and 30 are required for the dwelling units. Approximately 3,812 SF of commercial space is proposed, of which the first 2,500 SF is exempt from providing parking. Three spaces, calculated as one per 500 SF are required for the remainder. One space is required per dwelling unit for a total of 33. The applicant is seeking a dimensional adjustment to provide 20 spaces. The applicant will meet the bicycle parking requirement of six spaces calculated as one per five dwelling units, in an indoor storage space.

Based on plans provided, it is the DPD's opinion that the applicant is eligible for the adjustment per section 1904.E.i of the ordinance, as mixed use development with over 50% devoted to residential use will be provided, which is a criterion that makes the development eligible for the adjustment. The DPD recommends that the CPC grant the adjustment finding conformance with the ordinance.

Design Waivers

The applicant has requested design waivers from the width of building entrances and the build-to percentage of the corner side setback on Glenbridge Ave. Per the applicant, the proposed widths of the entranceways are required to provide for wider doors and more area for movement, which would be constrained by the prescribed eight foot width. The wider entranceways will also allow for installation of benches for public seating. The 35' wide entrance on Glenbridge Ave was designed to offer more space for pedestrian movement for sidewalk users by setting the first floor back from the lot line. As discussed, the side lot line on Glenbridge Ave is curved, which would make it difficult to set the building to the lot line within the build-to zone. The DPD recommends that the CPC grant the requested design waivers, finding that they would enhance the sidewalk and allow for more efficient pedestrian movement.

Landscaping

With the parcel measuring approximately 17,000 SF, approximately 2,500 SF of canopy coverage is required. The applicant will meet this requirement by making plantings of small, medium and large trees around the site, mostly concentrated in the planting strip in the rear of the lot, and at the entrance to the parking area. It appears that the plan will provide the required amount of coverage with the final canopy coverage calculation and species selections subject to the Forester's approval.

Lighting

Per the submitted lighting plan, the applicant will use a combination of bollard lights and wall mounted lights to illuminate the site. The plan will conform to the ordinance as there will be no light trespass onto neighboring properties and no more than one footcandle at the lot lines .

Environmental Impact

Drainage and erosion control plans have been submitted. The applicant will employ an underground stormwater infiltration system to treat runoff from the site, which is intended to reduce the amount of runoff for one to 100 year events. The erosion control plan will employ soil stabilization measures and erosion barriers during construction and will conform the City's regulations. The plans shall be subject to the City Engineer's approval.

Waiver from submission of state approvals

The applicant has requested a waiver from submission of state approvals at the preliminary plan stage, and is requesting that they be submitted with the final plan. The applicant has applied for approvals from the Narragansett Bay Commission (NBC) and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). It is the DPD's opinion that the CPC should grant the waiver finding that it is required in the interest of good planning practice as the approval periods for state bodies may vary. Granting the waiver would allow the applicant to proceed with the development process.

Combination of stages

The applicant is requesting to combine master and preliminary plan approval. Subject to granting the requested waiver, the DPD recommends that the CPC combine approval, finding that the applicant has submitted the required elements for both stages.

FINDINGS

Section 806 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 Master and Preliminary Plans:

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

The subject property is located in an area that the future land use map of Providence Tomorrow: The Comprehensive Plan intends for Neighborhood Commercial/Mixed Use development. The plan describes this area as one intended for traditional, pedestrian transit oriented uses that serve neighborhood needs and where multifamily development is encouraged. The development conforms to this land use designation and is also in conformance with objective H-2 of the plan which encourages building new housing.

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

Use: The proposed retail, office, and residential mixed-use development is permitted by right in the C-2 zone.

Dimension: As discussed, the development will conform to the dimensional and design requirements of the C-2 zone subject to the CPC granting the requested design waivers .

Parking: The applicant will meet the parking requirement subject to the CPC granting a dimensional adjustment to provide 20 spaces where 33 are required.

Landscaping: It appears that the applicant will meet the canopy coverage requirement. The final landscaping plan shall be subject to the City Forester's approval.

Lighting: The submitted lighting plan conforms to the ordinance.

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.*

No negative environmental impacts are expected as the applicant is expected to come into conformance with applicable environmental regulations.

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.*

The applicant shall apply for an administrative subdivision to merge the lots prior to final plan submission. Subject to the subdivision being approved, there are no physical constraints that impact development of this property as it will comply with the dimensional requirements of the C-2 zone.

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 will be provided from Hartford Ave, Glenbridge Ave and Bowlett Street.

RECOMMENDATION—Waiver from submission of state approvals

The CPC should vote to grant the waiver from submission of state approvals at the preliminary plan stage subject to the condition that the applicant submit the approvals with the final plan and return to the CPC if the approvals result in a change to the plan.

RECOMMENDATION—Combination of stages

Subject to waiving the state approval requirement, the CPC should vote to combine master and preliminary plan approval finding that all items required for both stages have been submitted.

RECOMMENDATION— Design Waivers

1. The CPC should grant the design waiver from building entrance width.
2. The CPC should grant the design waiver from the corner side setback build-to zone requirement.

RECOMMENDATION— Master and Preliminary Plan

Based on the foregoing discussion and conditioned on the CPC approving the items above, the master and preliminary plans should be approved subject to the following conditions:

1. The CPC should grant the dimensional adjustment for 13 spaces, finding that the applicant will be providing residential and commercial mixed use development.
2. The drainage calculations shall be subject to the City Engineer's review.
3. The landscaping plan shall be subject to the City Forester's approval.
4. The applicant shall apply for an administrative subdivision to merge the lots on site.
5. The applicant shall submit any required encroachment permits with the building permit application.
6. Final plan approval should be delegated to DPD staff.