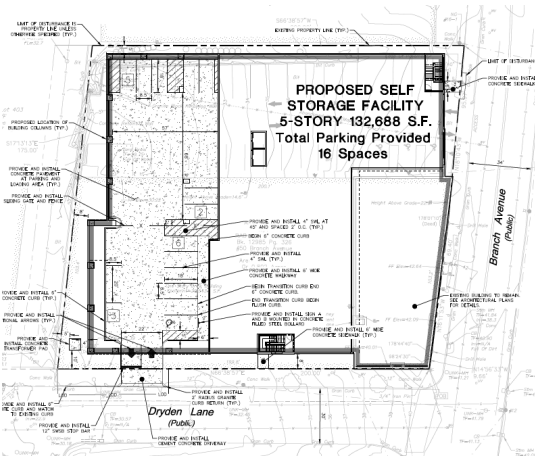


Providence City Plan Commission

February 21, 2023



AGENDA ITEM 5 ■ 50 BRANCH AVE



Site Plan



View from Dryden Lane



Aerial view of the site

OVERVIEW

OWNER/ APPLICANT:	Trunk Space LLC, Applicant RAB Properties LLC, Owner	PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	The applicant is proposing to partially demolish a portion of the existing building and construct a five story, approximately 73' tall self storage facility with 1,399 units, maintaining the front portion of the building. Master plan approval with dimensional adjustments for parking and height, and a design waiver are requested.
CASE NO./ PROJECT TYPE:	22-067 MA Master Plan		
PROJECT LOCATION:	50 Branch Ave C-3 zoning district AP 74 Lot 98	RECOMMENDATION:	Approval of the Master Plan based on the noted findings
NEIGHBORHOOD:	Mt Hope	PROJECT PLANNER:	Choyon Manjrekar

A dimensional adjustment has been requested for a proposed height of approximately 73' and five stories, which exceeds the 50' four-story height limit of the zone.

Over 60% of the front façade will be located within the build-to zone. A design waiver from the corner side build-to setback requirement is requested where over 40% of the side lot line will be located outside of the build-to zone, with an approximately eight foot setback maintained from most of the Dryden Street lot line.

In addition to the brick on the preserved portion of the building, the building's exterior will be composed of permitted building materials like concrete block, brick veneer, metal paneling and glass. It appears that the front façade on Branch Ave which includes the preserved portion of the former building, will provide more than the 50% of required transparency. It is unclear if the building meets the 10% transparency requirement on the upper stories. The DPD identified areas on the front and side facades where more transparency can be introduced to meet the requirement. The preliminary plan should indicate conformance with this requirement. The façade will feature projections, recesses and areas of transparency, which will add variety to the building's face. The transformer will be located in the rear yard, between the building and the rear lot line.

Landscaping

Approximately 5,250 SF of canopy coverage—five large trees and one small—is required to meet the landscaping requirement based on the size of the development. According to the conceptual landscaping plan, shrubs and plantings will be made in the front, side and rear yard. The plan does not currently include trees. Per the City Forester, the applicant may make offsite plantings to meet the requirement.

A detailed landscaping plan that includes the tree species, their location, and the canopy coverage calculation shall be included with the preliminary plan.

Parking and Dimensional adjustment

The development requires 28 spaces, calculated as one space per 50 storage units, but 16 will be provided. A dimensional adjustment for 12 spaces is requested. Based on a review of plans, it appears that the adjustment is being requested due to the physical characteristics of the lot whose grade does not allow for the location and circulation for the required amount of parking. Based on an analysis provided by the applicant, the storage space use will not generate traffic that requires more parking than what is provided. Therefore, the DPD recommends that the CPC grant the requested adjustment.

Two loading spaces are also required as the building will provide over 100,000 SF of space. A loading area is identified at the rear of the parking area, but the spaces are not demarcated. The loading area can accommodate the two spaces with dimensions of 10' in width, 22' in length and a 10' clearance. The loading spaces shall be defined in the preliminary plan.

Dimensional adjustment for height

The applicant is requesting a dimensional adjustment to provide a height of approximately 73' and five stories, over the 50', four story height limit of the C-3 zone. As discussed, the grade of the lot greatly varies from east to west, which results in a lower average grade from where building height is calculated—resulting in a taller structure. The proposed height appears to be influenced by preserving the façade of the existing building, which adds to the proposed height. Further, the applicant is providing structured parking, making the building eligible for the additional height. Therefore, the DPD recommends that the CPC grant the dimensional adjustment, finding that it is required due to the physical characteristics, location and size of the site.

Design Waiver

The applicant is requesting a design waiver from the corner side yard build-to percentage requirement on Dryden Lane. The portion of the existing building that will be preserved is set to the side lot line, but the rest of the structure extending to the rear of the lot will be set 8' from the side lot line—outside of the 5' build-to zone. A 6' walkway and landscaping is proposed within this setback. The DPD is not opposed to granting the waiver as it would enhance pedestrian movement and increase opportunities for landscaping.

Environmental management

The applicant is required to conform to the City's stormwater ordinance and submit any required state approvals at the preliminary plan stage.

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 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.*

The subject property is located in an area that the future land use map of Providence Tomorrow: The Comprehensive Plan intends for General Commercial/Mixed Use development. The plan describes these areas as ones intended to foster large commercial and retail developments that serve citywide needs. The development would conform to this land use designation and is located adjacent to a commercial plaza. The development would conform to objective BE-2 of the plan which encourages new development to complement traditional character. Preservation of a portion of the building conforms to objective BE-5 which encourages preservation of buildings that contribute to the urban fabric.

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

Use: Self-storage facilities are permitted by right in the C-3 zone.

Dimension: The development will conform to the dimensional and design requirements of the C-3 zone subject to the CPC granting a dimensional adjustment for height, and a design waiver from the corner side setback requirement.

Parking: The applicant will meet the parking requirement subject to the CPC granting a dimensional adjustment for parking. The applicant shall outline the loading areas and their dimensions on the preliminary plan.

Landscaping: The applicant shall meet the landscaping requirement under the supervision of the City Forester and determine appropriate locations for the plantings.

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 significant 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.*

There are no physical constraints that impact development of this property, as the lot will comply with the dimensional requirements of the C-3 zone with no impediments to development.

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 Branch Ave and Dryden Lane.

RECOMMENDATION—DIMENSIONAL ADJUSTMENTS

The CPC should vote to grant the requested dimensional adjustments finding that they are required due to the physical characteristics, location and size of the site, and because the applicant is eligible with provision of internal parking:

- The CPC should vote to grant a dimensional adjustment to permit the proposed height of 73’ and five stories.
- The CPC should vote to grant a dimensional adjustment for 12 parking spaces where 28 spaces are required but 16 will be provided.

RECOMMENDATION—DESIGN WAIVER

The CPC should grant the design waiver from the corner side build-to percentage requirement finding that the applicant will be providing an expanded walkway with more opportunities for landscaping.

RECOMMENDATION—MASTER PLAN

Based on the foregoing discussion, the CPC should vote to approve the master plan, finding it to be in conformance with the zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall provide a detailed landscaping plan at the preliminary plan stage.
2. The loading spaces shall be defined on the preliminary plan.
3. The preliminary plan shall include more transparent areas on the upper stories and include a transparency calculation.