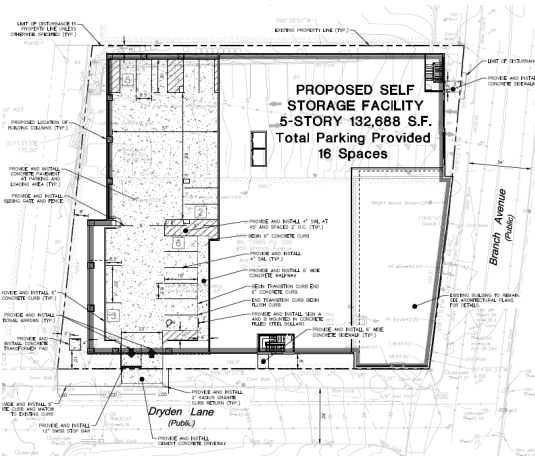


# Providence City Plan Commission

May 16, 2023



## AGENDA ITEM 5 ■ 50 BRANCH AVE



Site Plan



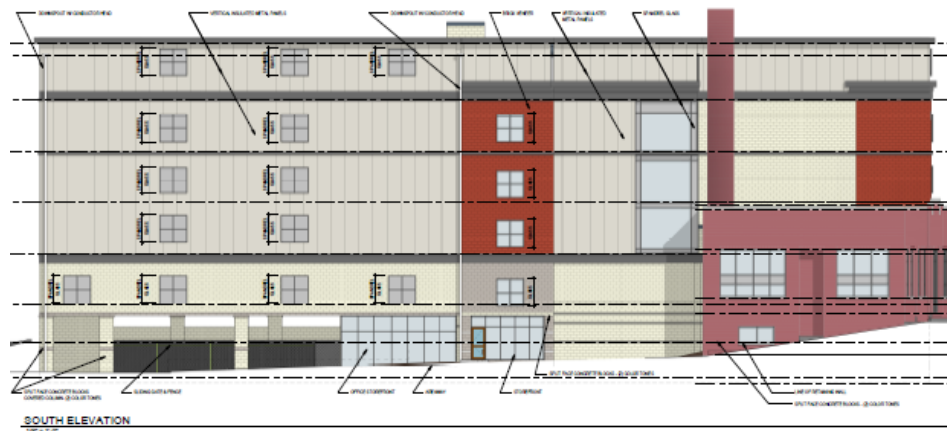
View from Dryden Lane



Aerial view of the site

### OVERVIEW

<b>OWNER/APPLICANT:</b>	Trunk Space LLC, Applicant RAB Properties LLC, Owner	<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION:</b>	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. Preliminary plan approval is requested.
<b>CASE NO./PROJECT TYPE:</b>	22-067 MA Preliminary Plan		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION:</b>	50 Branch Ave C-3 zoning district AP 74 Lot 98	<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	Approval of the Preliminary Plan based on the noted findings
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD:</b>	Mt Hope	<b>PROJECT PLANNER:</b>	Choyon Manjrekar



South and East Elevations

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The development is composed of a single lot measuring 35,000 SF and occupied by a former government building in the C-3 zone. The main entrance fronts on Branch Ave, with the rear of the building sloping to the west on Dryden Lane. The applicant is proposing to construct a five story, approximately 73’ tall self storage facility with 1,399 units, which will incorporate the remainder of the existing building. Total area of approximately 132,000 SF is proposed. The CPC granted a dimensional adjustment for the proposed height at the master plan stage, which exceeds the 50’, four story height limit of the C-3 zone. A dimensional adjustment for parking was also granted, where 28 parking spaces are required but 16 will be provided. A design waiver from the corner side yard build-to percentage was also granted.

**ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES**

Use

The property is zoned C-3 where self storage facilities are permitted by right.

Dimensions and site design

The lot is located at the corner of Branch Ave and Dryden Lane. There is a grade difference of approximately 11’ between the front and rear lot lines. Most of the building’s rear is proposed for demolition with approximately 103’ of the building’s frontage on Branch Ave, and 40’ on Dryden Lane to remain. This portion of the building will be incorporated into the proposed structure. The building will be set to the front and side lot lines and run with the grade of the lot, with pedestrian access provided from Branch Ave and access to the internal parking area provided from Dryden Lane.

The CPC granted a dimensional adjustment for the proposed height of approximately 73' and five stories—which exceeds the 50' four-story height limit of the zone—at the master plan stage. 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 was granted with master plan approval, 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 on the ground floor and over 10% transparency on the upper stories. A row of windows on the fourth story of the north elevation and west elevations have been added in response to the CPC's suggestion that more detail be added to those facades. 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

According to the landscape plan, a total of eight trees with shrubs and bushes will be installed in the front, side and rear yards. A row of plantings will be located in the expanded side yard setback adjacent to the pedestrian walkway. A total of 5,400 SF of canopy coverage will be provided which will meet the canopy coverage requirement of 5,250 SF.

#### Parking and Dimensional adjustment

The development requires 28 spaces, calculated as one space per 50 storage units, but 16 will be provided. The CPC granted the adjustment for 12 spaces at the master plan stage, finding that it was required 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 CPC granted the requested adjustment.

Two loading spaces are required as the building will provide over 100,000 SF of space. The loading spaces are identified at the rear of the parking area.

#### Dimensional adjustment for height

The CPC granted 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. The CPC granted the adjustment as 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 CPC found that preserving the façade of the existing building adds to the proposed height. The CPC found that the applicant was also eligible for the additional height due to provision of structured parking.

#### Design Waiver

The applicant requested 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 CPC found that granting the waiver would enhance pedestrian movement and increase opportunities for landscaping. The applicant has added a planting strip within this area.

## Environmental management

According to the submitted drainage memo, the site is exempt from Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) review.

However, improvements will be introduced to the site. The proposed stormwater management system will employ a rock trench to meet water quality volumes and a hydrodynamic separator to treat runoff from the interior parking area. Two subcatchment areas will discharge to the municipal drainage network. Stormwater on the south side of the roof is collected into two roof leaders and discharged into an existing stormwater manhole on-site. Stormwater on the north side roof will be collected into four roof leaders and discharged into the rock trench on the West side of the site to meet water quality and groundwater recharge volume requirements. Calculations indicate that the amount of runoff will not increase for one to 100 year storm events. The calculations shall be subject to the City Engineer's review.

The erosion control plan will employ hay bales, sediment traps and assigned stockpile areas to prevent erosion during construction.

## **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 conforms to the dimensional and design requirements of the C-3 zone as the CPC has granted a dimensional adjustment for height, and a design waiver from the corner side setback requirement.

Parking: The applicant will meet the parking requirement with the CPC's granting of a dimensional adjustment for parking.

Landscaping: The applicant will meet the landscaping requirement based on the submitted plan. The plan shall be subject to the City Forester's approval.

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—PRELIMINARY PLAN**

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

1. The drainage plan shall be subject to the City Engineers approval.
2. The landscaping plan shall be subject to the City Forester's approval.
3. Final plan approval should be delegated to DPD staff.