

# Providence City Plan Commission

April 15, 2025



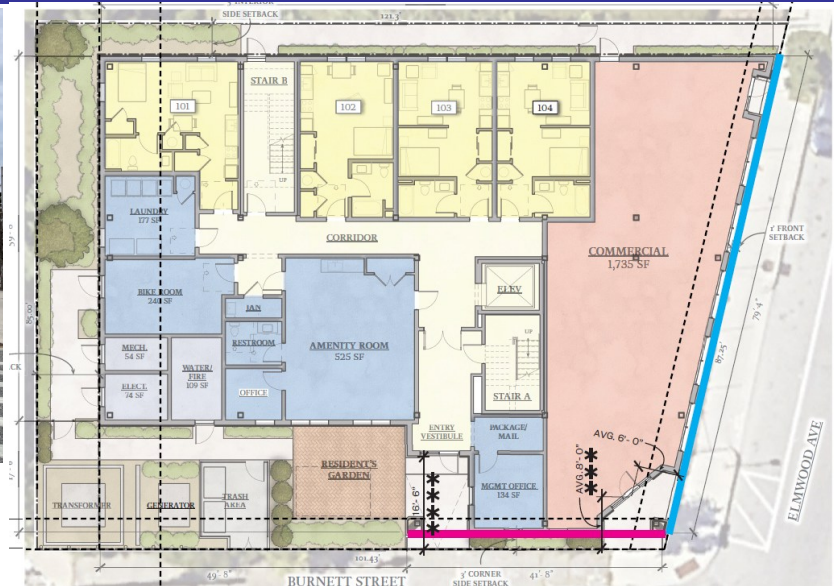
## AGENDA ITEM 3 ■ 327 ELMWOOD AVE



View from Burnett Street



Aerial view of the site



Site plan with first floor

### OVERVIEW

<b>OWNER/ APPLICANT:</b>	Womens Development Corp, Applicant  Providence Redevelopment Agency, Owner	<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION:</b> The applicant is proposing to construct a 59'tall, five story mixed use building with commercial on the ground floor and 44 residential units. A dimensional adjustment from the height limit is requested in addition to a design waiver for the dimensions of entrances.
<b>CASE NO./ PROJECT TYPE:</b>	<b>25-013MI—327 Elmwood Ave</b>  Minor Land Development	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION:</b>	327 Elmwood Ave  AP 49 Lot 603; C-2 zoning district	<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> Approval of the preliminary plan with requested adjustments
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD:</b>	West End	<b>PROJECT PLANNER:</b> Choyon Manjrekar



Elmwood Ave elevation and rendering

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The subject lot measures approximately 9,474 SF, is vacant and zoned C-2. It fronts on Elmwood Ave to the east and Burnett Street to the South. The applicant is proposing to construct a 59' tall, five story mixed use building with commercial space on the ground floor and 44 affordable dwelling units. The applicant is requesting a dimensional adjustment from the 50' four story height limit of the zone, and a design waiver from the depth of building entrances.

## ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES

### Use

The site is zoned C-2, where mixed use development consisting of commercial space and multifamily housing is permitted by right. The commercial space could be used for an office or retail use which are both permitted uses.

### Dimensions and Site Design

Elmwood Ave has been designated as the front yard with the commercial space occupying the first floor. Two entrances to the commercial space will be provided, one from Elmwood Ave and a second at the corner of Elmwood Ave and Burnett Street. Entrance to the residential area will be provided from Burnett Street. A design waiver from the 6' permitted depth of building entrances has been requested for the corner and residential entrances, with respective proposed depths of 8' and 16.6". Two additional entrances to the residential and commercial space will be provided from the northerly side setback. A dimensional adjustment for the building's height is also requested. A transformer, trash pickup area, generator and resident garden will be located adjacent to the residential entrance on Burnett Street. A landscaped rear yard will be provided within the 10' rear setback from the R-3 zone to the west. Four residential units will be located on the first floor in addition to amenities like bike parking, laundry and a mailroom. Ten units will be provided on each of the second through fifth stories.

The first floor will be treated with a brick veneer and glass providing over 50% of fenestration as required for commercial development in the C-2 zone. The upper stories will be treated with composite siding and decorative paneling. Three dimensional variety is provided by projecting portions of the façade and having the building address the corner intersection. A metal parapet will be provided on the roofline. The building's design conforms to the guidelines for multifamily development in section 1202.K of the ordinance as it employs consistent materials and breaks up the façade with projecting features.

#### Parking and site access

No vehicle parking is required as the lot measures less than 10,000 SF. The applicant will meet the bicycle parking requirement of nine spaces by providing 22 long term spaces on the first floor.

#### Landscaping

Approximately 1,400 SF of canopy coverage is required to meet the 15% canopy coverage requirement for the lot. The applicant will meet the requirement using a combination of eight small and medium trees with shrubs providing additional interior landscaping in the rear yard and garden. The applicant will exceed the canopy coverage requirement by providing 4,700 SF. The street tree planting shall be subject to the City Forester's approval. The Forester requires that the applicant be responsible for street tree maintenance.

#### Lighting

The applicant has submitted a lighting plan that conforms to section 1301 of the ordinance as it employs downward facing light fixtures with no spillover onto neighboring property.

#### Drainage and erosion control

Stormwater will be managed by directing roof runoff into the City sewer on Elmwood Ave and incorporating pervious pavers and introduction of pervious surfaces to promote stormwater infiltration. The submitted plan indicates that the amount of runoff will decrease for one to 100 year events. The erosion control plan will employ a sediment trap with a maintenance schedule and a designated soil stockpile area.

#### Findings—Design Waiver

Ground floor building entrances are limited to a width of six feet and a depth of eight feet. The applicant is seeking a design waiver for the depth of building entrances to the commercial space from Elmwood Ave and the building entrance on Burnett Street. Both entrances will have a width of eight feet but respective depths of eight feet and 16'6". The DPD makes positive findings with the criteria in section 1005.E of the Development Review Regulations (DRR):

*1. Literal enforcement of the provision for which a waiver is sought is impracticable.*

Based on plans provided, the depth of the entrance to the commercial space is due to the diagonal entrance addressing Elmwood Ave and Burnett Street. The depth of the Burnett Street entrance appears to be a design decision for the residential entrance.

*2. The design or development condition resulting from the waiver has no significant adverse impact on the surrounding natural environment, built environment, or pedestrian and traffic circulation.*

The waiver will not have any adverse impacts outside of the lot.

*3. Granting of the waiver is in the best interest of good planning, urban design, and/or architecture practice, as evidenced by consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.*

Based on the foregoing discussion, the waivers appear to be in the interest of good planning practice and design given the site's layout.

#### Findings—Dimensional Adjustments

The applicant is seeking a dimensional adjustment for a height of 59' and five stories where 45' and four stories are permitted in the C-2 zone. The DPD makes the following findings in conformance with section 1005.B of the Development Review Regulations.

*1. The application is eligible for a dimensional adjustment because it meets one or more of the eligibility criteria of Section 1904.E.1 of the Zoning Ordinance.*

The applicant is eligible for the adjustment per section 1904.E.1.h of the ordinance through provision of mixed use development with over 50% dedicated to housing, and provision of affordable housing.

*2. The requested or approved dimensional adjustment is within the allowable adjustments listed in Section 1904.E.2 of the Zoning Ordinance.*

The requested adjustment is within the 24'/two story adjustment that can be granted by the CPC in section 1904.E.2 of the ordinance.

*3. The extent of the dimensional adjustment is reasonably related to the condition that makes the project eligible for the dimensional adjustment.*

The DPD finds that provision of amenities like mixed use development and affordable housing are reasonably related to the request for additional height and recommends that the CPC grant the requested adjustment.

#### **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 the Providence Comprehensive Plan, the lot is located under the neighborhood commercial land use designation, where mixed use development is encouraged. The development conforms 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: Mixed use development consisting of multifamily residential and is permitted by right in the C-2 zone.

Dimension: The development will conform to the ordinance subject to the CPC granting the requested height adjustment and design waiver.

Parking: The applicant will meet the bicycle parking requirement.

Landscaping: The applicant will meet the canopy coverage requirement. The planting of the street trees shall be subject to the City Forester's approval.

Lighting: The applicant will meet the lighting requirement.

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.*

A drainage control plan which shall be subject to the City Engineer's review, and an erosion control plan were included with the submission. 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 complies with the dimensional requirements of the C-2 zone. The applicant is required to obtain any encroachment permits at the permitting stage.

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 street access is provided from Elmwood Ave and Burnett Street.

#### **ACTION—Dimensional Adjustment**

The CPC should vote to grant the dimensional adjustment, finding that the applicant meets the criteria for dimensional adjustments in 1904.E of the ordinance and having made positive findings in conformance with section 1005.B of the DRR.

#### **ACTION—Design Waiver**

The CPC should vote to grant the design waiver for the proposed width of building entrances finding that they are in the interest of good planning practice and design.

#### **ACTION—Preliminary Plan**

Based on the foregoing discussion, the CPC should vote to grant preliminary plan approval subject to the following conditions:

1. The stormwater management plan shall be subject to the City Engineer's approval.
2. The planting of the street trees shall be subject to the City Forester's approval. The applicant shall be responsible for maintenance of all proposed street trees.
3. Any required encroachment permits shall be submitted at the permitting stage.
4. Final plan approval shall be delegated to DPD staff.