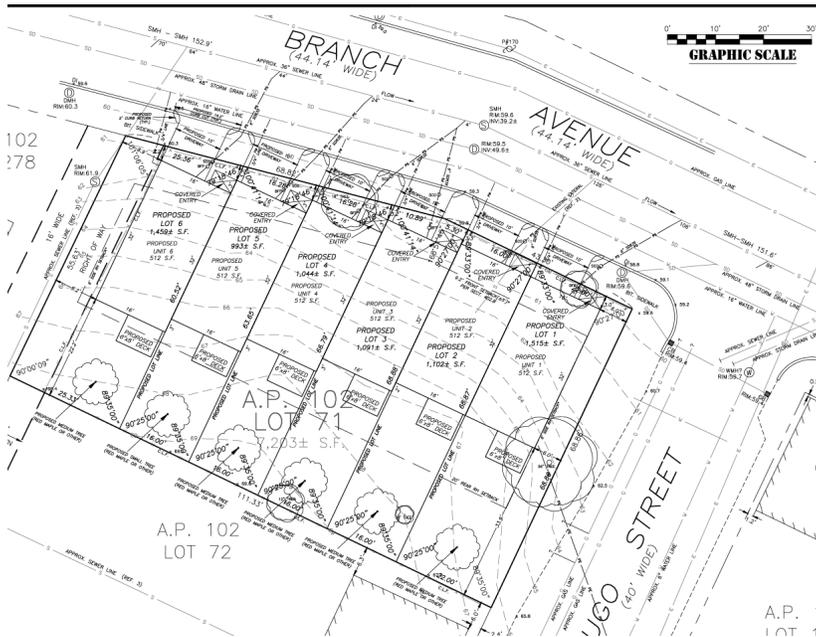


Providence City Plan Commission

January 20, 2026



AGENDA ITEM 2 ■ 784 BRANCH AVE



Proposed subdivision

Aerial view of the site

OWNER/APPLICANT: Tosbine LLC

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant is proposing to construct a six unit rowhouse development and is seeking relief from the front yard setback requirement, front yard impervious requirement, maximum building coverage, rear setback and setback of garage from the front lot line.

CASE NO./PROJECT TYPE: 25-074 UDR—Development Plan Review and Minor Subdivision with Unified Development Review

PROJECT LOCATION: 784 Branch Ave
AP 102 Lot 71
R-4 zone

RECOMMENDATION: Approval of preliminary plan and dimensional variances

NEIGHBORHOOD: Wanskuck

PROJECT PLANNER: Choyon Manjrekar



View from Branch Ave



Proposed elevation from Branch Ave

DISCUSSION—Dimensional Relief

The subject lot measures approximately 7,215 SF and is occupied by a house that will be demolished for construction of a six unit rowhouse development. The lot is located at the corner of Branch Ave and Hugo Street with the garage and building entrances oriented to Branch Ave. The lot will be subdivided into six lots with each unit on a separate lot.

The applicant is requesting relief from the following:

- Front yard setback of 3' where 5' is required.
- Over 33% of front yard impervious coverage.
- Maximum building coverage between 47% to 52% where 45% is permitted by right.
- Integral garage being situated over 3' from the front lot line.
- Rear setback relief from 20' requirement if required.

Findings—Dimensional Variance

Section 1902 of the zoning ordinance requires that the CPC find evidence of the following standards in order to grant a variance:

1. *That the hardship from which the applicant seeks relief is due to the unique characteristics of the subject land or structure and not to the general characteristics of the surrounding area; and is not due to a physical or economic disability of the applicant, excepting those physical disabilities addressed in Rhode Island General Laws §45-24-30 (16).*

The subject property is unique as it is a corner lot with an upward sloping grade from Branch Ave and an irregularly angled front lot line. Based on plans provided, this configuration contributes to the hardship faced when developing for rowhouses. Rowhouses are typically horizontally aligned with a common front setback. Plans indicate that each unit will maintain varying front yard setbacks and exceed the amount of front yard impervious surface coverage due to the angled front lot line. The average front yard setback line of 10' requires a setback between 5' to 15' but each unit will maintain a shallower setback of three feet as maintaining a deeper setback would affect conformance with the rear yard setback requirement and require additional paving. The angled lot line and the grade result in lots of different areas where some of the units exceed the maximum building coverage limit of 45%. Per section 1302.J.3.E, integral garage doors may be within 0' to 3' from the front lot line. The angled

lot line appears to increase this distance for some of the units.

2. *That the hardship is not the result of any prior action of the applicant.*

As discussed, the hardship is related to the lot's configuration which necessitates subdivision and layout of the units in a manner that needs the requested relief. These conditions are not related to a prior action of the applicant.

3. *That the granting of the requested variance will not alter the general character of the surrounding area or impair the intent or purpose of this Ordinance or the Comprehensive Plan.*

The property is located in proximity to a mill development and a diversity of housing with varying setbacks and lot coverage limits. Granting the relief is not expected to alter the character of the surrounding area or affect conformance with the comprehensive plan.

4. *In addition, the City Plan Commission, as part of unified development review, requires that evidence be entered into the record of the proceedings showing that In granting a dimensional variance, the hardship that will be suffered by the owner of the subject property if the dimensional variance is not granted will amount to more than a mere inconvenience.*

Denial of the relief would require redesigning the development and possibly requiring additional relief from the rear yard setback requirement and rear yard impervious coverage, which would amount to more than a mere inconvenience.

RECOMMENDATION—Dimensional Variance

Based on the foregoing discussion, the DPD recommends that the CPC approve the requested dimensional relief as described. Relief from the rear yard setback requirement is not required.

DISCUSSION—Development Plan Review for Rowhouses

The development will consist of six units with varying setbacks, surfaced with vinyl siding with an integral garage and canopy covered stoop for each unit. The canopy and irregular alignment of the units as previously described provide dimensional variety on the façade and break up the roofline. Over 15% of transparency is provided on each façade. There is a separation of 15' between the walls of each unit. Further, each unit has a separate street facing entrance with access provided from Branch Ave. Per the plan, each unit will be within the 45' height limit for rowhouses in the R-4 zone. The DPD finds that the development meets the dimensional and design requirements for rowhouses from table 4-1 and sections 1202.K of the ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION—Development Plan Review

Based on the foregoing discussion, the DPD recommends that the CPC vote to find that the rowhouses conform to the design requirements of section 1202.K and the dimensional requirements of table 4-1 of the ordinance.

FINDINGS—Minor Subdivision

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 subdivisions. 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.*

The subject property is located in an area that the future land use map of the Providence Comprehensive Plan has designated for low density residential development abutting open space, business-mixed use and high density residential development land use designations. These areas are intended for residential uses of varying densities. The lots created through the subdivision would allow for creation of rowhouses at a density appropriate to the

development pattern envisioned by the plan. Creation of housing would conform to objective H-2 of the plan which encourages creation of new housing.

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

New lots for rowhouses in the R-4 zone require a minimum lot size of 700 SF, minimum width of 12' for interior lots and 18' for end units. Each lot will exceed these requirements and provide over 400 SF of pervious coverage per lot. The subdivision will conform to the ordinance based on the proposed layout, and subject to the CPC granting the requested relief.

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.*

It does not appear that the subdivision will pose a significant negative environmental impact as the applicant is required to comply 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.*

It does not appear that there are any physical constraints that affect the lot's 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 street access is provided from Branch Ave and Hugo Street.

RECOMMENDATION—Minor Subdivision

Based on the analysis and findings contained in this report, the CPC should vote to approve the preliminary plan pursuant to dimensional relief being granted through unified development review. The plan should be approved subject to the following condition:

The subdivision shall not be finalized until the dwellings are constructed.