

CITY OF

UTILITY PERMIT REGULATIONS

(Chapter 23, Section 23-35, Utility Permits)

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND



PREPARED BY:

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
75 CHAPMAN STREET
PROVIDENCE, RI 02905
401-680-7506**

ENGINEERING DIVISION

September 25, 2026

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1. UTILITY PERMIT REGULATIONS

1.1. AUTHORITY

These regulations are promulgated by the City of Providence, Department of Public Works (DPW), by and through its Director, in compliance with Section 23-35 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Providence, "Utility Permits."

1.2. APPLICABILITY

Any utility company or affiliated company (hereinafter, "utility") receiving a Road Opening Permit to alter, install or upgrade equipment located upon or under any public street or sidewalk, or upon or under any private property, hereinafter referred to as "projects" on a non-emergency basis.

1.3. PURPOSE

The purpose of these regulations is to:

- A. Establish a clear process to be followed whenever a utility performs work within the public Right-of-Way (ROW) or private property; including the provision of public notice, coordination with other utilities, and restoration of conditions to their prior state upon completion, and
- B. Provide residents and business with information about the project, including but not limited to scope, schedule, purpose of the project and methods for minimizing impact and maximizing outreach/communication.

1.4. PERMIT PROCESS

- A. Permits required from DPW for all projects:
 - 1. Road Opening Permit (Engineering Division) – permission to excavate in a specific location within the Public Right-of-Way (ROW).
 - 2. Traffic Permit (Traffic Engineering Division) – permission to perform work in or occupy the Public ROW at a certain date and time, including but not limited to lane closure, sidewalk closure, road closure and detours. A traffic engineering permit is also required when temporary "no parking" signs are required for the work zone setup.
- B. Type A Projects: Projects located in historic areas (defined as National Register historic districts or local historic districts) Hereinafter, "Type A Projects."
 - 1. Local historic review of utility installation and maintenance within the right-of-way (ROW) typically centers on preserving the visual and physical integrity of historic streetscapes while allowing for necessary infrastructure upgrades.
 - 2. Work on property and/or within the ROW within the local historic districts is reviewed by the Historic District Commission or its staff in accordance with the Commission's Standards and Guidelines and the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration & Reconstruction. Local historic overlay districts can be found on the DPW's Utility Capital Improvement Map under the Historic Districts layer (see link below).

https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/787af5ef68ea400f859438f8a7ce4ee2/page/Ho_mepage

3. Work on property and/or within the ROW not located within a local historic district but listed on the National Register of Historic Places is reviewed by staff in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration & Reconstruction. Information on properties listed in the National Register can be found using the RI National Register Search tool on the State of Rhode Island Historic Preservation & Heritage Commission Web Page (see links below):

Listed Properties <https://preservation.ri.gov/historic-places/national-register/listed-properties>

RI National Register Search <https://www.ri.gov/preservation/search/>

4. Work in the right-of-way is reviewed by staff to ensure disturbed surface materials are repaired to the original state, or better, and any installations in or on the ROW are not obtrusive, inappropriate, etc.
5. A project plan must be submitted to:
 - (a) The City Clerk,
 - (b) The Department of Planning and Development (DPD), and
 - (c) The Department of Public Works (DPW).
6. Submission Process
 - (a) A Road Opening Permit shall be submitted through the City's online permitting portal (<https://providenceri.portal.opengov.com/>). Both the DPD and DPW will be notified of the application and have access to the submission through the portal.
 - (b) After submission of the Road Opening Permit Application, the applicant shall obtain the assigned permit application number (e.g. ENG-26-xxxx) from their account dashboard. This number shall be included with the plan submission to the City Clerk's Office.
 - (c) Submissions to the City Clerk shall be made via email to the following address: cityclerk@providenceri.gov within 1 business day of the Road Opening Permit Application submission. The subject line of the email shall include: **"Road Opening Permit Application ENG-yy-xxxx, Company Name, Location."** The size of the submission email shall be less than 30 mb including attachments. If the submission email exceeds 30 mb, a condensed version of the plan shall be submitted via email and a full copy shall be delivered to the City Clerk's office.
 - (d) Once the Submission is made to the City Clerk, the Applicant shall send a message to the reviewer under the "City Clerk Submission Confirmation" step in the online permit portal stating that a copy of the plan has been submitted to the City Clerk and the date it was submitted.
7. The project plan must:
 - (a) Include a detailed description of the proposed work; and
 - (b) Description of how the project will adhere to standards set forth by the Department of Planning and Development for preserving the visual and physical integrity of historic streetscapes. Provide construction details for work on/around and restoration of historic materials.

streetscapes. Provide construction details for work on/around and restoration of historic materials.

(c) Notifications to abutters regarding the project and information regarding preservation and restoration of historic materials and features.

(d) The plan must also meet the conditions of Type B or C projects.

C. Type B Projects: Projects expected to require less than 48 hours to fully complete. Hereinafter, "Type B Projects." Under these regulations, fully complete shall mean the time from the start of the excavation until the temporary patch is installed under ideal conditions.

1. Expedited review process shall be conducted by DPW
2. Work approved under the permit applications (including final restorations) must meet all applicable safety and construction standards as set forth by the City and relevant regulatory bodies.

D. Type C Projects: Projects expected to require 48 hours or longer to fully complete. Hereinafter, "Type C Projects." Under these regulations, fully complete shall mean the time from the start of the excavation until the temporary patch is installed.

1. A comprehensive project plan must be submitted to the Department of Public Works 90 days prior to the desired date of approval of a permit. The plan shall be submitted through the City's online permit portal as part of a Road Opening Permit application.
2. The local City Councilors must be notified of the plan concurrently with the submission to the Department of Public Works. The City Council Office will be notified as part of the online application submission and will then notify the local City Councilor(s). Any comments or concerns from the City Council Office will be provided to the applicant through and shall be addressed/resubmitted to the Department of Public Works through the online permit portal.
3. The comprehensive project plan shall include the following:
 - (a) A detailed schedule of when the work is to be performed in accord with the dates submitted in the work permit (including but not limited to: construction schedule, restoration schedule, and coordinated utilities schedule (if applicable));
 - (b) If the actual schedule deviates from the submitted schedule, a new plan shall be submitted quarterly to the Department of Public Works and shared with the project abutters, stakeholders, other utilities and City Council
 - (c) A description of the proposed work;
 - (i) how the utility company or affiliated company will attempt to coordinate with other entities who may need access to underground infrastructure in order to avoid multiple disturbances to neighbors. A Project Coordination Form (Appendix A) will need to be executed by each utility operator and relevant City Departments stating whether they have work in the proposed area and approximate schedule); and
 - (ii) what entity has responsibility for, and custody of, interim and final restorations and the associated dates.

(d) An indication of how residents, property owners and businesses will be notified

- (i) If the work includes planned system upgrades and disturbance of the roadway, notice should be in writing 30 days prior to any work, and then again 48-72 hours in advance.
 - (ii) For other types of non-emergency upgrades, the plan should include how residents will be notified or why notification is not necessary.
 - (iii) Quarterly updates shall be provided to the abutters regarding the work completed, work remaining and schedule.
 - (e) Information on whether access to a dwelling is required for the project. Include information on how prompt scheduling and compliance with requests to access can help accelerate the schedule. The plan schedule should consider typical response times for access requests.
 - (f) Details on plans for sediment and erosion control; and
 - (g) Plans for daily clean up and equipment storage (including construction equipment, materials, port-a-pottys, etc.) to minimize impact on abutting properties and prevent damage to private property; and
 - (h) Timeline for full restoration of any city-owned or privately owned assets (e.g., sidewalks, streets, lawns, etc.); and
 - (i) Contact information for the project manager, including email and a daytime phone number. An emergency after-hours phone number shall also be provided.
- 4. Quarterly reports – the responsible utility shall submit quarterly status reports, including the current schedule, revised schedule (if applicable), supplemental outreach/communication and abutter compliance for access. Reasons for schedule deviation should be indicated.
 - 5. For planned, non-emergency updates to the gas system only, the plan must also include
 - (a) A reference to expenditure approvals from the Public Utilities Commission; and
 - (b) A brief explanation of the timing and why the work is necessary for any non-emergency system upgrades

1.5. ENFORCEMENT/FINES

- A. In addition to any other applicable fines or penalties provided by law, a fine of up to \$500. may be imposed per project, per day until the issue is remedied, if a utility:
 - 1. Fails to submit a project plan as required by these regulations prior to the commencement of a project; or
 - 2. Performs work without a permit; or
 - 3. Deviates from the proposed and approved plan to the detriment of residents; or
 - 4. Fails to submit a quarterly report.
- B. The fines in section A. above shall NOT apply to the Providence Water Supply Board or any successor entity created by law to manage the City of Providence's water supply systems. Any violations of these regulations by the Providence Water Supply Board or any successor

entity created by law to manage the City of Providence's water supply systems may result in the scheduling of a public hearing to receive Providence Water's explanation of their inability to comply, and public comment on the impacts of the violation.

1.6. UTILITY EMERGENCIES

A. Definition: "utility emergency" shall include:

1. A sudden, unexpected condition that poses an immediate threat to life, health or safety; or
2. A risk of substantial damage to property or the integrity of utility services

B. The utility must submit the following in association with emergency work:

1. Email notification of the emergency (at or before the start of work) to the Department of Public Works (DPW) to the following addresses:

(a) DPWengineering@providenceri.gov

(b) nurso@providenceri.gov

2. Submit a Road Opening Permit Application within 24 hours (one business day) of commencing work,
3. Submit a Traffic Permit Application if emergency work will last more than one day; and
4. Submit an after-action report describing the emergency and the nature of the work performed, to the City Clerk and the DPW within 30 days of the project commencement.

(a) Submission to the City Clerk shall be made via email to the following address: cityclerk@providenceri.gov. The subject line of the email shall include: **"After Action Report, Emergency Road Opening Permit ENG-yy-xxxx, Company Name, Location."** The size of the submission email shall be less than 30 mb including attachments. If the submission email exceeds 30 mb, a condensed version of the report shall be submitted via email and a full copy shall be delivered to the City Clerk's office.

(b) Submission to the DPW shall be through the online permit portal.

- C. NOTE: Failure to comply with the requirements of this section may constitute a violation and subject the utility to fines and/or other penalties provided by this ordinance or otherwise by law.

1.7. EXEMPTIONS

A. Providence Water Supply Board's (Providence Water's) state and federally funded lead water service line replacement program work is exempt from the requirements for Type A and Type C projects (except as noted below).

1. Lead water service line replacement work shall not be exempt from submitting a Project Coordination Form; however, the completion of the form will be allowed to occur after a permit(s) is issued.

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APPENDIX A:

PROJECT COORDINATION FORM

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APPENDIX A: PROJECT COORDINATION FORM



ENGINEERING DIVISION
Department of Public Works
75 Chapman Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02905
Phone: 401-680-7506
www.providenceri.gov

APPENDIX A:
PROJECT COORDINATION FORM

**NOTE: UTILITY/DEPARTMENT REVIEW FORM (PAGE 3 OF 4) MUST BE
COMPLETED AND RETURNED TO PROJECT PROPONENT
WITHIN 30 DAYS OF RECEIPT**

A completed Project Coordination Form shall be submitted as part of the Road Opening Permit Application for all Type C projects (≥ 48 hours to complete). The project proponent shall coordinate the work with all applicable Utilities and City Departments prior to issuance of a Road Opening Permit. If other utilities/departments have anticipated work within the project limits during the construction period or prior to the 5-year excavation moratorium, information shall be provided on how the work will be coordinated so that it runs concurrently; or that the work will be postponed until after the moratorium period.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Company: _____ Utility Type: _____

Project Name: _____

Project Description:

Schedule
(Month/Year): Start: _____ End: _____ Final Restoration*: _____

** Upon completion of final restoration, the impacted sections of the road(s) will enter into a 5-year excavation moratorium for non-emergency work.*

Location:	STREET	LIMITS
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

☐ see attached for additional streets

APPENDIX A: PROJECT COORDINATION FORM

Project Name: _____

COORDINATION CHECKLIST *(to be completed by project proponent)*

The following checklist shall be completed by the project proponent upon receipt of all Utility/Department Review Forms (next page) to provide a summary of the project coordination status.

Utility/Department	Coordination Status (Select One)			
	No Response	No Work	Work Coordinated*	Work Deferred (until after Moratorium)
Utility Company				
Narragansett Bay Commission	☐	☐	☐	☐
Oshean (Fiber)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Providence Water Supply Board	☐	☐	☐	☐
RI Energy (Electric)	☐	☐	☐	☐
RI Energy (Gas)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spectrum (Cox Communications)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Verizon	☐	☐	☐	☐
Verizon/MCI	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
City Department/Division				
Highway Division (DPW)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sewer Division (DPW)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traffic Engineering (DPW)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Planning & Development	☐	☐	☐	☐
Public Properties	☐	☐	☐	☐
Telecommunications	☐	☐	☐	☐

* For all projects that require coordinated work, a Coordination Plan shall be submitted as part of the Road Opening Permit Application.

ATTACHMENTS

Utility/Department Review Forms

APPENDIX A: PROJECT COORDINATION FORM

(NOTE: FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED TO PROJECT PROPONENT WITHIN 30 DAYS OF RECEIPT)

Project Name: _____

UTILITY/DEPARTMENT REVIEW FORM *(to be completed by reviewing utility/department)*

A copy of this form (page) shall be completed by each utility/department that is required to review the proposed project and returned to the project proponent. The project proponent shall include all completed review forms as attachments to the Project Coordination Form when submitting the Road Opening Permit Application.

Company/
Department: _____ Utility Type: _____

Contact Information

Name: _____ Phone No.: _____

Position/Title: _____ Email: _____

The above listed utility/city department has reviewed the proposed project to identify if there is any planned or anticipated work within the construction period or prior to the 5-year excavation moratorium that will be in place upon final road restoration.

The company/department listed above has

☐ No planned/anticipated work

☐ Planned/anticipated work *(If planned/anticipated work is checked, complete the following)*

Work Description:

Schedule

(Month/Year): Start: _____ End: _____

Coordination (select all that apply):

☐ Planned/anticipated work can be scheduled to start at the completion of the proposed project.

☐ Planned/anticipated work can be performed concurrently with the proposed project.

☐ Planned/anticipated work can be deferred until after the excavation moratorium.

☐ Other: _____

☐ Additional information and/or comments are attached.

SIGNATURE

Name/Title:

Date:

APPENDIX A: PROJECT COORDINATION FORM

COORDINATION CONTACT LIST

NARRAGANSETT BAY COMMISSION Name: Chris Dracoules Phone: 401-461-8848, ext. 569 Email: CDracoules@narrabay.com	VERIZON/MCI Name: Steve Parretti Phone: stephen.parretti@verizon.com Email: 508-892-3381
OSHEAN (FIBER) Name: Ray O'Neil Phone: 401-398-7556 Email: ray.oneil@oshean.org	PVD-HIGHWAY DIVISION (DPW) Name: Sal Solomon Phone: 401-680-7558 Email: Ssolomon@providenceri.gov
PROVIDENCE WATER SUPPLY BOARD Name: Federico St. Sauveur Phone: 401-521-6300, ext. 7212 Email: PVDplanning@provwater.com	PVD-SEWER DIVISION (DPW) Name: Dave Mambro Phone: 401-680-7547 Email: dmambro@providenceri.gov
RHODE ISLAND ENERGY (ELECTRIC) Name: Alysha Knowles Phone: 401-479-5681 Email: AJGiulietti@RIEnergy.com	PVD-TRAFFIC ENGINEERING (DPW) Name: Nate Urso Phone: 401-680-7518 Email: Nurso@providenceri.gov
RHODE ISLAND ENERGY (GAS) Name: May Zhen Phone: 401-784-7090 Email: mzhen@rienergy.com	PVD-PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT Name: Chris Martin Phone: 401-680-8523 Email: Cmartin@providenceri.gov
SPECTRUM (COX COMMUNICATIONS) Name: Josh Pacheco Phone: 401-258-9909 Email: joahua.pacheco@cox.com	PVD-PUBLIC PROPERTIES Name: Anthony Alves Phone: 401-680-5501 Email: aalves@providenceri.gov
VERIZON Name: Joshua Miller Phone: 978-770-8632 Email: joshua.miller@verizon.com	PVD-TELECOMMUNICATIONS Name: David Radcliffe Phone: 401-243-6000 Email: dradcliffe@providenceri.gov

APPENDIX B:

UTILITY PERMIT SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

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UTILITY PERMIT SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

TYPE A PROJECTS (HISTORIC DISTRICTS)

- ☐ Project plan including:
 - ☐ Detailed description of proposed work.
 - ☐ Description of how the project will adhere to the Department of Planning and Development standards for historic streetscapes.
 - ☐ Construction details for work on, around, and restoration of historic materials.
 - ☐ Notification that will be sent to abutters regarding the project and information on how the historic materials/features will be preserved and/or restored.
- ☐ Email a copy of the plan to the City Clerk (cityclerk@providenceri.gov) after the permit application is submitted.
- ☐ Message reviewer in the online permit portal that plan has been emailed to the City Clerk.

TYPE C PROJECTS (>= 48 HOURS)

- ☐ Comprehensive project plan including:
 - ☐ Detailed project schedule.
 - ☐ Description of the proposed work.
 - ☐ Description of how the project has been coordinated with other utility and city work.
 - ☐ Final restoration plan including the responsible parties and associated dates.
 - ☐ Abutter notification process and schedule including:
 - ☐ 30 day notice prior to planned system upgrades and disturbance of the roadway.
 - ☐ 48-72 hour notice in advance of the work.
 - ☐ Quarterly project updates to abutters for projects with durations longer than 90 days.
 - ☐ Information on if access is required to dwellings, buildings, and properties to complete work.
 - ☐ Abutter sediment and erosion control plans/details.
 - ☐ Housekeeping, daily clean-up, and material/equipment storage provisions.
 - ☐ Planned, non-emergency gas projects
 - ☐ Reference to Public Utilities Commission approvals.
 - ☐ Explanation of the timing and why the work is necessary.

EMERGENCY WORK

- ☐ Email notifications to DPW at or before the start of work (DPWengineering@providenceri.gov and nurso@providenceri.gov).
- ☐ Submit Road Opening Permit Application within 24 hours (one business day) of commencing work.
- ☐ Submit a Traffic Permit Application if work will last more than one day (24 hours).
- ☐ Submit After Action Report to DPW and City Clerk within 30 days of the start of work.

APPENDIX C

SECTION 1, CHAPTER 23, SECTION 23-35 – UTILITY PERMITS (CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE)

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CHAPTER 2026-6

**No. 100 AN ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 23 OF THE CODE OF
ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE ENTITLED "STREETS,
SIDEWALKS AND PUBLIC PLACES", AS AMENDED, TO CHANGE
ARTICLE 1, SEC. 23-35 RELATING TO UTILITY PERMITS
Approved March 11, 2026**

Be it ordained by the City of Providence:

**SECTION 1. Chapter 23 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Providence, entitled
"Streets, Sidewalks and Public Spaces", as amended, is hereby further amended as follows:**

Section 23-35. - Utility Permits.

Prior to any utility company or affiliated company receiving a permit to alter, install, or upgrade equipment located upon or under any public street or sidewalk, or upon or under any private property, the utility company or affiliated company must submit a project plan as follows:

- 1) For projects located within historic areas, defined as National Register historic districts or local historic districts, a plan must be submitted to the city clerk, and the department of planning and development for review. Such plan must include a detailed description of the proposed work and must adhere to standards set forth by the department based on its historic preservation design guidelines.
- 2) For projects located outside historic areas and projected to require less than forty-eight (48) hours for full completion shall be eligible for an expedited review process. Such applications may be exempt from the full, standard permitting requirements outlined in this section, provided they meet all applicable safety and construction standards as set forth by the City and relevant regulatory bodies, a plan must be submitted to the department of public works for review prior to the approval of the permits. Such plan must include a detailed description of the proposed work and must adhere to the guidelines set forth in the comprehensive plan. The plan must include:
 - a) A detailed schedule of when the work is to be performed in accord with the dates submitted in the work permit.
 - b) A plan for how the utility company or affiliated company will attempt to coordinate with other entities who may need access underground infrastructure in order to avoid multiple disturbances to neighbors, detailing responsibilities for, and custody of, interim and final restorations.
 - c) If the plan is for planned, non-emergency updates to the gas system, the plan must include reference to expenditure approvals from the Public Utilities Commission and a brief explanation of the timing and why the work is necessary for any non-emergency system upgrades.
 - d) The plan will indicate how residents, property owners, and businesses will be notified. If the work includes planned system upgrades and disturbance of the roadway, this should include written notice 30 days in advance of any work to be done, and then again 48-72 hours in advance by the utility. For other type of non-emergency upgrades, the plan should include how residents will be notified or why notification is not necessary.
 - e) Details on plans for sediment and erosion control,
 - f) Plans for daily clean up and equipment storage to minimize impact on abutting properties and not cause damage to private property.
 - g) Timeline for full restoration of any city-owned or privately owned assets (e.g. sidewalks, streets, lawns, etc).

- h) Contact information for the project manager to address any comments, questions, or concerns regarding the project from the city.
- 3) The department of public works shall submit to the city clerk a list of permitted projects by the utility company or affiliated company at least once per quarter. Access to this plan will be received on a Council agenda.
 - 4) If the utility company or affiliate company fails to submit a project plan as prescribed in this section prior to the commencement of a project and receipt of a permit or if the utility deviates from the proposed and approved plan to the detriment of residents, the utility company or affiliate company may be fined up to \$500 per day per project, until the issues are remedied.
 - 5) The fines prescribed in this section shall not apply to the Providence Water Supply Board, or any successor entity created by law to manage the City of Providence's water supply systems. However, violations of this section by the Providence Water Supply Board, or successor entity created by law, may result in the scheduling of a public hearing to hear from Providence Water to explain any inability to comply and receive public comment on the impacts of the violation.
 - 6) The director of the department of public works, or designee, in consultation with the department of planning and development, shall promulgate rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this section within 90 days of enactment.
 - 7) The provisions of this section shall not apply in the case of a utility emergency, defined for the purposes of this section as a sudden, unexpected condition that poses an immediate threat to life, health, or safety, or a risk of substantial damage to property or the integrity of utility services, provided that:
 - a) The utility company or affiliated company notifies the department of public works of the utility emergency no later than twenty-four (24) hours after commencing work.
 - b) The utility company or affiliated company submits an after-action report to the city clerk, and the department of public works describing the emergency and the nature of the work performed within 30 days of project commencement.
 - c) Failure to notify the department of public works within twenty-four (24) hours and/or failure to submit an after-action report to the city clerk and department of public works may constitute a violation of this subsection.
 - 8) The provisions of this ordinance shall not apply to the state and federally funded lead service line replacement programs of the Providence Water Supply Board or successor entity created by law, provided that it shall obtain a permit to alter, install or upgrade equipment located upon or under any public street, or upon any private property and pays the applicable permit fee.

SECTION 2. This ordinance shall go into effect by September 30, 2026.

IN CITY COUNCIL
FEB 19 2026
FIRST READING
READ AND PASSED
Tina L. Martini
CLERK

IN CITY
COUNCIL
MAR 05 2026
FINAL READING
READ AND PASSED
Juan M. Pichardo
Juan M. Pichardo, Acting Council President
Tina L. Martini
CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

Burt R. Sil
Mayor

Date: *3/11/26*