

East Providence Waterfront Special Development District
Permit Application
Ivy Place, 15 Ivy St, 64 Taunton Ave, East Providence, RI 02914
Revised November 2020

Narrative Description of the Development

General description

Ivy Place is a residential and live/work development of thirteen townhomes located at the intersection of Taunton Avenue and Ivy Street in the center of downtown East Providence. The site is 20,041 sf (.46 acres). The zoning district is the Northern Waterfront District, Taunton Ave Subdistrict.

Project objectives

Ivy Place is designed to provide good quality affordable homes for working families who are otherwise priced out of stable housing. Beneficiaries are households earning between 50% - 100% of area median income. Rather than renting or purchasing sub-standard, unhealthy homes, low income residents will be secure in their housing so they can pursue healthy and productive lives and build family wealth.

Use

The use is multi-family ownership housing with a total of thirteen units. Nine of the units are residential townhomes; four of the units are artisan live/work. The legal structure is a land trust.

Impact of project

Ivy Place is the redevelopment of a blighted, vacant and underutilized city lot on the main commercial corridor of East Providence. Located in the center of the downtown, and across the street from City Hall, this project will provide much needed affordable housing and small commercial/retail spaces. It is part of a diverse urban neighborhood with easy access to a generous array of retail, services, schools and employment opportunities. The redevelopment of the lot will contribute to the walkable, livable fabric of the city center offering numerous benefits to the residents, workers and businesses of the region:

- Increase the supply of high-quality and well-located affordable workforce housing.
- Provide flexible live/work units to support local small business development.
- Provide additional residential density to support increased local economic and cultural activity.
- Help revitalize the main street corridor of East Providence.
- Improve environmental sustainability through ‘green’ development practices.
- Support smart-growth development by increasing residential density along a transit corridor in close proximity to goods and services.

Locational Advantages

Situated on the corner of Taunton Avenue and Ivy Street, the new development is ideally located to take advantage of a variety of transportation options and other neighborhood amenities. The parcel is on a major RIPTA bus route that runs from the east end of the city all the way into downtown Providence. Highway access to I-195 is minutes away. The East Bay Bike Path that connects to Providence and south through Riverside, Barrington, Warren and Bristol, is within the distance of a short bike ride. Residents can walk to a variety of services, the library, post office, health centers, restaurants, banks and an array of retail stores.

Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

Ivy Place is designed with a strong emphasis on sustainability by minimizing the development's impact on the environment. The buildings are designed and will be constructed to be Energy Star certified. One of the strongest sustainable attributes of this project is the fact that the site is located in an urban core where existing infrastructure and utilities are in place and ready to provide service. By increasing residential density, the project increases the efficiency of use of physical, social and economic infrastructure.

Consistency with East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan

Ivy Place supports many of the goals and objectives stated in the Plan as described below.

Goal 1/ General Land Use Goals

Ivy Place redevelops a blighted vacant lot with a mix of residential and commercial uses. By concentrating a dense development in the center city, Ivy Place indirectly maintains existing waterfront scenic viewshed corridors, waterfront recreational opportunities and open space. Located in the center city of East Providence, the development takes advantage of existing transportation infrastructure of the local streets, bus routes, sidewalks and access to the bike path. The redevelopment employs best practice stormwater management with an underground filtration chamber. Ivy Place expands and improves the City's supply of affordable housing.

Goal 2/ Expand and Enhance Waterfront Public Access and Transportation Opportunities

By concentrating residential development in the center city, Ivy Place indirectly expands waterfront public access. The development is strategically located to take advantage of the existing transportation infrastructure; the efficiency of the existing transportation systems is increased by the introduction of additional users.

Goal 3/ Enhance Waterfront Special Development District Economic Development Opportunities

Ivy Place provides the opportunity for new small business development in the ground floor spaces of the live/work units on the commercial corridor of Taunton Ave.

Goal 4/ Enhance the Attractiveness of the Project Area

The buildings are designed and sited to reinforce the street edge and provide a strong anchor to the corner of Taunton Ave and Ivy St. The massing, proportions and architectural expression of the buildings reinforce the commercial character along Taunton Ave and the residential character along Ivy Street. The building forms and detailing lend distinction to the prominent corner. The streetscape is enhanced through additional street trees on Ivy Street and a bench on the Taunton Ave sidewalk. Ample parking is located behind the buildings, internal to the site and concealed from public view.

Goal 5/ Protect and Enhance the Natural Waterfront Environment

Although the Ivy Place site is approximately a mile east of the waterfront proper, it is designated part of the Special Waterfront District in recognition of its gateway location and to encourage its development. The project utilizes sustainable design principals and meets all requirements for stormwater management and groundwater runoff. The stormwater is managed to encourage recharge of groundwater and filtered to reduce pollution loads. The landscape plan includes native, non-invasive, sustainable, draught-resistant and low maintenance ornamental plants and deciduous trees that are suitable for an urban environment.

Goal 6/ Revitalize Existing Commercial Areas

Ivy Place redevelops the former Bomes Theater site on Taunton Ave with residential and commercial uses designed to increase density and encourage additional economic activity, enhancing both the function and appearance of this section of Taunton Ave. All parking for the development is off-street so that on-street parking is available to visitors and shoppers.

Goal 7/ Protect Existing Residential Land Uses on Roger Williams Avenue and Veterans Memorial Parkway

One of the objectives of this goal is to mitigate against gentrification. Although not specifically located on Roger Williams Avenue or Veterans Memorial Parkway, Ivy Place protects against gentrification by provided deed-restricted affordable housing.

Unit sizes / handicapped access

Nine of the townhomes are 3-bedroom units and four are 2-bedroom units. One of the 3-bedroom townhomes is handicapped accessible.

Construction type

Buildings are 3-story, wood frame and slab-on-grade construction complying with all relevant life safety codes.

Affordability

The development is designed to be mixed income with a range of household incomes from 50% to 100% of area median income (AMI). There will be recorded affordable housing deed restrictions to assure that the City is able to include the units in its State approved affordable housing inventory. Long-term affordability (99 years) will be maintained with a Land Trust structure, which will be overseen by NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley and a yet to be determined Monitoring Agency. Common area maintenance will be the responsibility of the homeowners as part of a Resident Association, which will also be part of their land trust documents. Land trust documentation is unavailable at this time, since the Project was just selected (one of twenty in the nation) as part of a special initiative to update affordable housing legal documents to assure long-term affordability. NeighborWorks America is funding this technical assistance using nationally recognized experts to assist us in crafting these critical documents.

Site planning

Stormwater management - All stormwater is managed on site through a subsurface filtration system as shown on the plans.

Grading – the building layout, elevations and access comport with the gentle 3% south-to-north rise of the site.

Parking – The site plan provides 26 on-site parking spaces, three of which are ‘compact’ and one of which is handicapped parking.

Architectural Planning and Design

The complex is designed to reinforce the urban streetscape along Taunton Ave and to introduce increased residential density along Ivy Street. All units are sited close to the property lines and sidewalk with all parking located behind the units. The location, layout and density are designed to promote walkability and economic activity in the downtown core. The architectural style is commercial along Taunton Ave and residential along Ivy Street.

Landscape Architecture

The site is landscaped with native, sustainable, drought-resistant and low maintenance plantings.

Signage

Other than building address numbers and way-finding signs for site circulation, there is no commercial signage proposed. Any future commercial signage will be the responsibility of the owners.

Traffic

The development is located to encourage the use of public transit. The new homes are just steps away from RIPTA bus line 34 (Taunton Avenue) with nearby connections to RIPTA routes 32, 33, 35 and 60 as well as direct service to the downtown Providence transit hub.

Ingress and egress for on-site parking is provided by a single curb cut on Ivy Street. Of the total parking allotment of 26 cars, we can estimate 90% of the allotment, or 24 cars, will be in regular use by homeowners. Of the 24 cars, we can estimate that up to 75%, or up to 18 cars, will exit the site between 7am and 9am and the same amount will enter the site between 4pm and 7pm. According to those estimates, the additional peak traffic flow at the corner of Ivy Street and Taunton Ave will be up to 9 cars per hour.

Noise

The 13-unit residential and live/work development will not generate noise pollution. Residents will be subject to local noise ordinances. During the construction phase, construction contracts will require adherence to City ordinances.

Odors

The development will not generate odor pollution.

Lights

The development will not generate light pollution. There are two parking lot lights that are designed to illuminate only the complex parking area. Light fixtures attached to the buildings will illuminate individual entrances throughout providing ample light for safety and security.

Compatibility of adjoining structures and uses

The development is designed to complement and comport with the residential uses on Ivy Street and the mixed commercial/residential uses on Taunton Avenue.

Construction Plan

Refer to civil drawings for erosion and sedimentation control plan. Staging and storage shall be internal to the site on the future parking lot area. Construction activities will abide by OSHA regulations and local ordinances. Detailed construction plan will be provided after contractor selection.

Waiver Requests

A waiver is needed for:
Side yard setback of 4.2' on Ivy St where 5' is required.