

FINAL NOTICE TO PUBLIC OF PROPOSED ACTION LOCATED WITHIN A 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN AND WETLAND

TO ALL INTERESTED AGENCIES, GROUPS, AND PERSONS:

Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RI Housing”) has conducted an evaluation of alternatives as required by Section 2(a) (4) of Executive Order 11988 for Floodplain Management and by Section 2(b) of Executive Order 11990 for the Protection of Wetlands (collectively the “Executive Orders”). These Executive Orders are implemented by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Regulations found at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection, to determine the potential impact that the proposed actions will have on the environment for development in a floodplain.

The Bernon Mills development activity is being funded under the HUD FHA Risk Share Insurance Program. The proposed development will involve substantial rehabilitation of three (3) historic mill buildings to provide sixty (60) affordable rental apartments, on a 3.91-acre parcel of land at 115 and 119 Front Street in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. The three parcels are identified as Lots 15-16 and 15-61 of Assessor’s Plat Map D3 and Lot 15-221 of Assessor’s Plat Map D4. A portion of the land area at the western part of the site is in the Special Flood Hazard Area AE 100-year floodplain, on approximately .33 acres of the Bernon Mills property.

RI Housing has considered the alternatives and mitigation measures to be taken to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial values. The site has been designed to limit the work within the 200-foot riverbank to only rehabilitation of the mill buildings’ previously developed portions and clearing of the riverbank and wetlands to be limited to invasive species. Bioretention areas are to be installed to promote groundwater recharge and improve the water quality of stormwater runoff that discharges to the Blackstone River. Native vegetation is to be planted throughout the site to reduce heat-island effect and further improve water quality. Earthwork will be performed to balance the cuts and fills within the floodplain. The existing floodplain is 4.4 feet below the finished floor elevation of the lowest residential units within the mill buildings, presenting no risk to lives or property within the building.

Several alternatives were analyzed to determine that 115 and 119 Front Street was the best location due to the ability to expand upon affordable housing units by using the existing infrastructure, restoring deteriorating historical buildings, while having minimal impacts to environmental features. The mitigation of environmental impacts include the net decrease of impervious area on the site.

It is the determination of RI Housing that there will be no adverse effect on the environment with the development of this project. The proposed action will not aggravate current hazards and will have no potential to disrupt floodplain, wetlands, or natural values.

Written comments may be addressed to Carol A. Ventura, Executive Director of RIHousing, at 44 Washington Street, Providence, RI 02903, by telephone at (401) 457-1129, weekdays from 9A.M. to 5 P.M., or by email at cventura@rihousing.com. Written comments must be received on or before November 25, 2022.

