

# City Planning Department



## Memo

To: Cranston City Plan Commission  
From: Alexander Berardo – Planning Technician  
Date: July 8, 2022  
Re: **Dimensional Variance @ 983 Cranston Street**

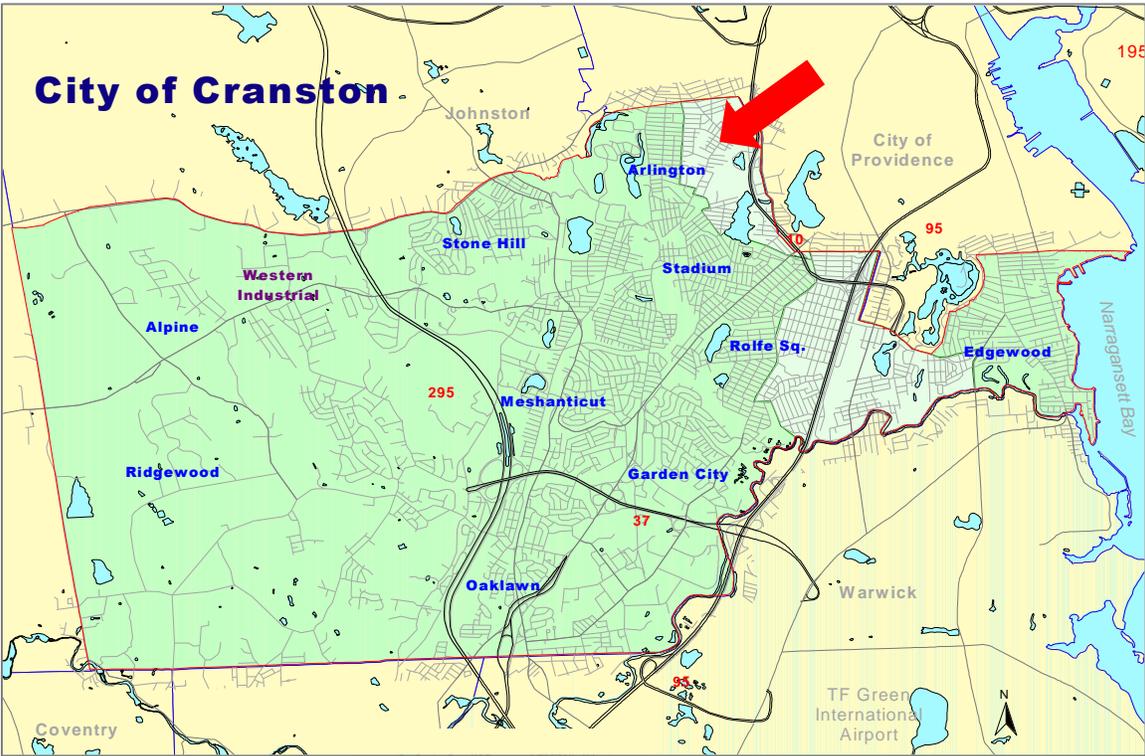
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**Owner:** Home Island Realty  
**Applicant:** Marino de la Cruz  
**Location:** 983 Cranston Street, AP 7, Lot 3043  
**Zone:** C-3 (General Business)  
**FLU:** Highway Commercial Services

**DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE REQUEST:**

1. To install a new double-sided free-standing sign with LED message board exceeding the allowable size. [17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity; 17.72.010 – Signs]

### LOCATION MAP



# ZONING MAP



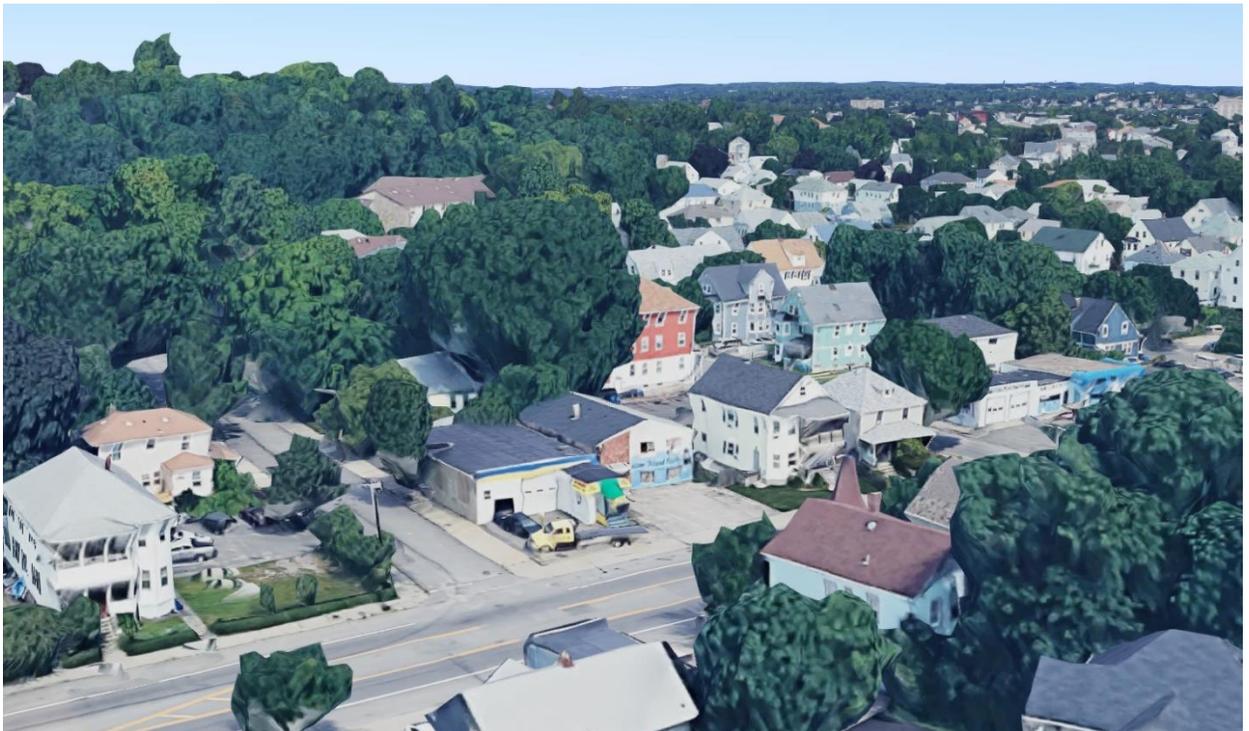
# FUTURE LAND USE MAP



## AERIAL VIEW



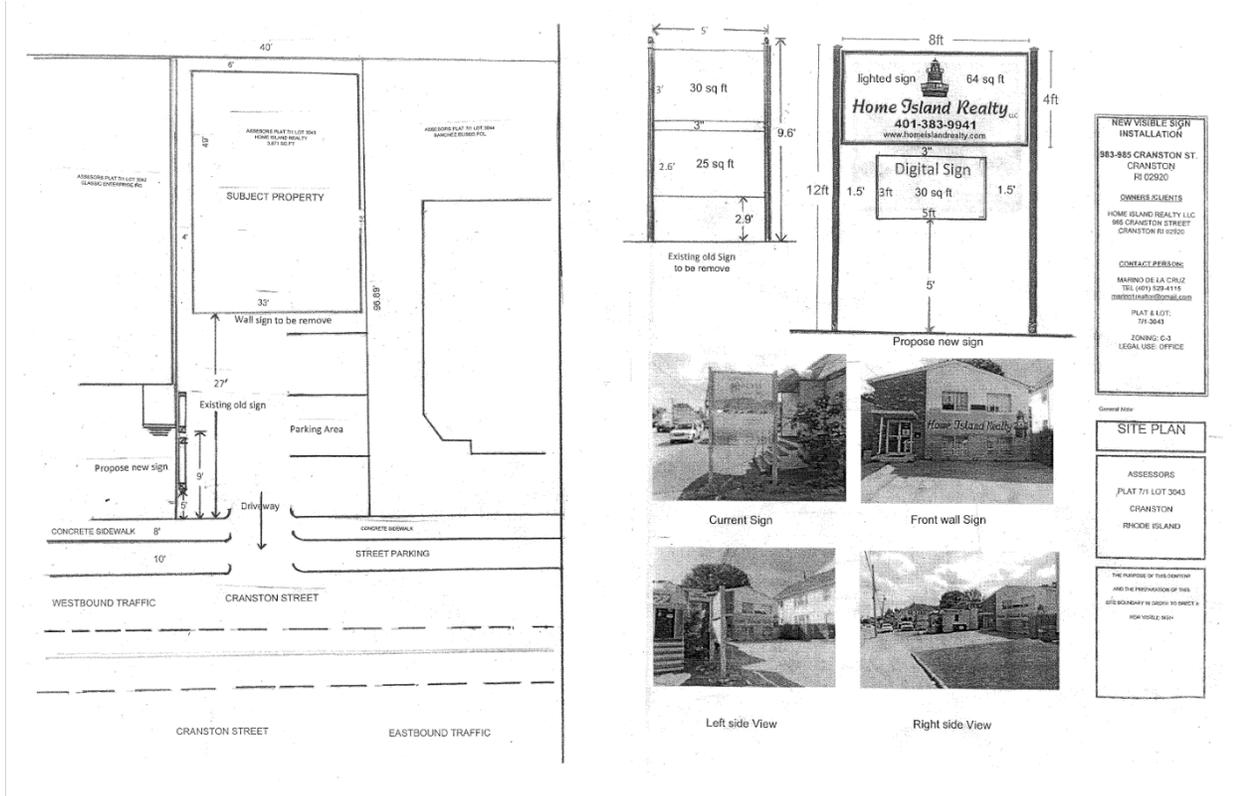
## 3-D AERIAL VIEW (facing west)



# STREET VIEW



# SITE PLAN AND DRAWING



## PLANNING STAFF FINDINGS

1. The subject parcel (AP 7, Lot 3043) is located on a 3,871 ft<sup>2</sup> lot with 40 feet of frontage in a C-3 zone.
2. The site presently features two separate signs: an illegal, mural-style wall sign on the building's façade that appears to exceed maximum dimensional standards for wall signs in a C-3 zone, and a 55 ft<sup>2</sup> freestanding sign located against the southern side lot line that exceeds the maximum allowable sign area and encroaches into the 5-foot side setback.
3. To increase visibility, the applicant seeks to replace both existing signs with a new freestanding sign that includes a 64 ft<sup>2</sup> LED lighted surface and a 30 ft<sup>2</sup> digital surface. The new sign would be located along the side lot line like the existing freestanding sign but would also be located further forward to the minimum five-foot setback from the front lot line. The applicant did not provide a scaled rendering of the proposed sign.
4. The applicant did not provide a site plan conducted to the standards of a Class I survey with the application, and it is unclear whether there is enough space between the front lot line and the existing sign for the proposed sign to meet the minimum five-foot setback. Staff is concerned the location of the proposed sign might be within the public right-of-way and feels it would be close enough to the roadway as to present site visibility issues for motorists attempting to exit the site and for pedestrians walking past.
5. The proposed sign maintains the violation of the minimum side setback, further exceeds the maximum sign area standards, and introduces two sign types (LED and digital) which are not expressly permitted in a C-3 zone.
6. Another of the applicant's justifications for locating the sign further forward – to gain sufficient room for an additional parking space – does not appear to make sense as the existing and proposed signs would both be flush with the side lot line. Furthermore, there is insufficient space to add conforming parking spaces on-site.
7. The Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Principle 4 advises to "*Protect the natural, historic and visual resources that define the neighborhoods*" (p.34). With oversized LED and digital sign faces, the proposed sign would negatively impact the remaining visual resources of the neighborhood, such as they exist on a commercial strip.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff finds that granting relief to allow the replacement of the existing sign with the proposed new sign would **not** be consistent with protecting the visual resources of the neighborhood as discussed in the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Principle 4. Staff notes that the existing mural and freestanding signs on the site are **not** compliant with City code and that the freestanding sign proposed to replace them would also fail to comply. The location of the proposed sign, closer to the curb than the existing sign, would also create new safety concerns that do not currently exist.

## RECOMMENDATION

Due to the findings that the application is generally inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and that it alters the character of the neighborhood, staff recommends the Plan Commission forward a **negative recommendation** on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.