

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Cosmo Properties, LLC (“Applicant”) has retained my professional land use planning and zoning consulting services (“Consultant”), in order to evaluate the proposed ‘**by-right**’ two-lot minor subdivision. In light of the subject development proposal, this land use consultant has thoroughly reviewed the minor subdivision and associated documentation submission, as well as the following regulatory documents:

- o City of Cranston Comprehensive Plan - June 2012 Amendment (“Comprehensive Plan”);
- o Land Development and Subdivision Regulations (“Subdivision Regulations”);
- o City of Cranston, Rhode Island, Zoning Ordinance (“Ordinance”); and
- o Pertinent state statutes and case law.

In addition, an extensive neighborhood analysis has been prepared to evidence neighborhood compatibility. The subject report will render a determination as to the appropriateness of the proposed two-lot minor subdivision, given the general character of the surrounding neighborhood, as well as the overall goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, specifically the Land Use and Housing Elements, and pertinent standards for the granting of the subdivision.

PRESENT PROPERTY CONDITIONS

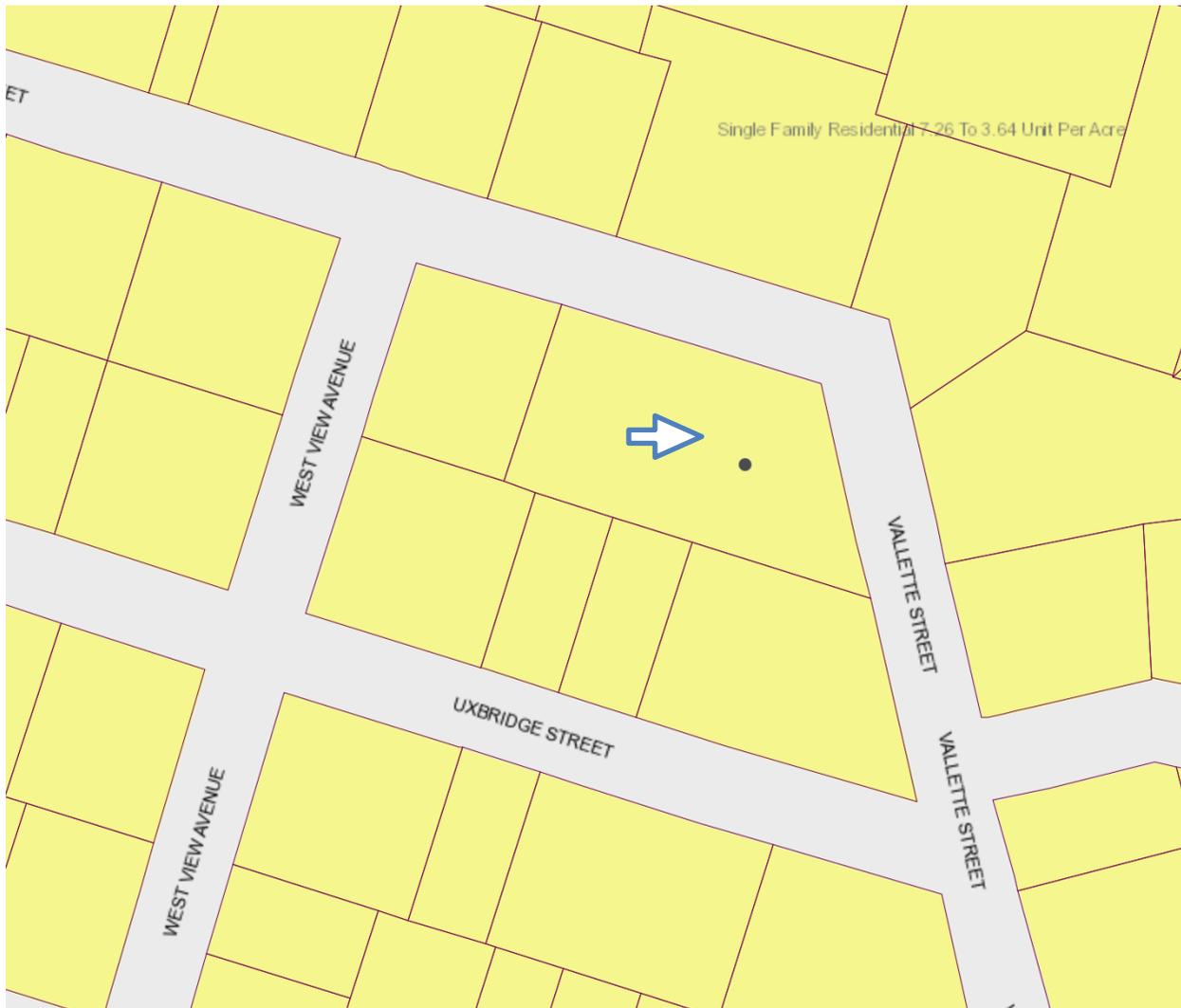
The property in question is addressed 175 Vallette Street, further designated Assessor’s Plat 11-4, Lot 1599, and containing upwards of 14,332 square feet, is presently improved with a single-family residence (“Property”). The Property is thoroughly unencumbered, being entirely comprised of upland land. Furthermore, the present residence is situated towards the far Easterly end of the property, fronting Vallette Street, thereby permitting accommodating further development. In addition, there is more than sufficient lot frontage, combined Vallette Street frontage exceeding 237 linear feet.

The applicant merely seeks appropriate development, to which he is legally entitled to. However, it oddly appears that local regulatory officials have previously opined in an alternate manner. Regulations are established for a specific purpose, namely to protect property rights, particularly when realizing a by-right, regulatory compliant subdivision.

The property is located within a Residential A-6 District (“A-6 District”), said district being defined pursuant to Section 17.08.010 ‘Zoning Districts,’ of the Ordinance, in the following manner:

A-6 District - *“Single-family dwellings on lots of minimum areas of six thousand (6,000) square feet.”*

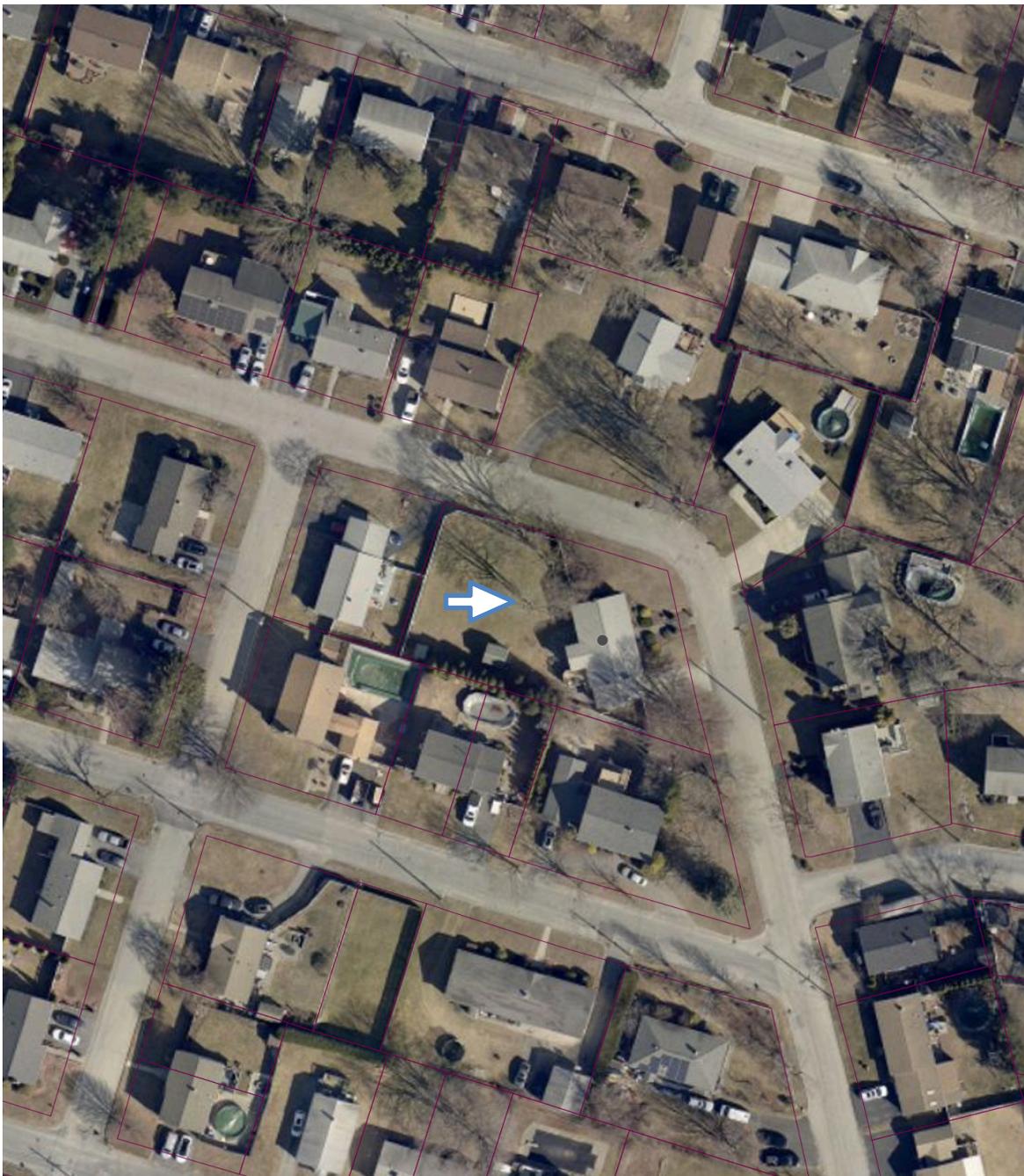
The referenced zoning district is further substantiated by the Comprehensive Plan - 'Future Land Use - Proposed Amendment - June 2012,' which illustrates that the subject property and all immediate blocks are classified 'Single Family Residential 7.26 To 3.64 Unit Per Acre'. This translates to a consistent one-unit per 6,000 square feet of overall lot area.



Once again, there is more than sufficient land area to accommodate the minimal density proposed. All requisite public infrastructure, most notably public sewer and water are available and will be accordingly connected.

NEIGHBORHOOD ANALYSIS

Both parcels will fully comport with all requisite regulatory dimensional criteria, thereby evidencing its appropriateness. Furthermore, the proposed subdivision is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood, as prescribed by the Comprehensive Plan, and further required by the Ordinance. An extensive analysis of the immediate neighborhood has been prepared to illustrate this point. In total, 44-lots were thoroughly reviewed. The results of the analysis conclude that 100% of the subject neighborhood is already developed, evidencing little to no further development potential. And yet, almost 20% of the subject neighborhood fails to comport with the minimum lot area requirement. The subject neighborhood is illustrated below, as excerpted from Google Earth.



The neighborhood is improved with a variety of styles, including ranches, raised-ranches, and colonial-style dwellings. The associated neighborhood characteristics are thoroughly reflected in the attached neighborhood analysis. The end result(s) substantiate this land use consultant's conclusion regarding neighborhood consistency.

MINOR SUBDIVISION PROPOSAL

The present proposal is to subdivide the property into two (2) distinct parcels; present single-family residence being maintained, and a new single-family residence to be introduced along the Westerly side of the Property entirely in accordance with the A-6 District dimensional requirements. Both parcels will be afforded direct lot frontage along Vallette Street.

The subject proposal merely entails subdividing the property into two (2) distinct lots, designated 'Parcel A' and 'Parcel B,' respectively, for subdivision purposes. The referenced lots will be accessed directly from Vallette Street. The proposed lots are further described as follows:

Parcel A - Will maintain the referenced single-family residence. It will contain approximately 8,302 square feet of overall land area and have in excess of 170 linear feet of lot frontage. The lot will be basically rectangular in configuration, as anticipated by the Subdivision Regulations. To reiterate, it will realize full compliance with both the Subdivision and Ordinance Regulations.

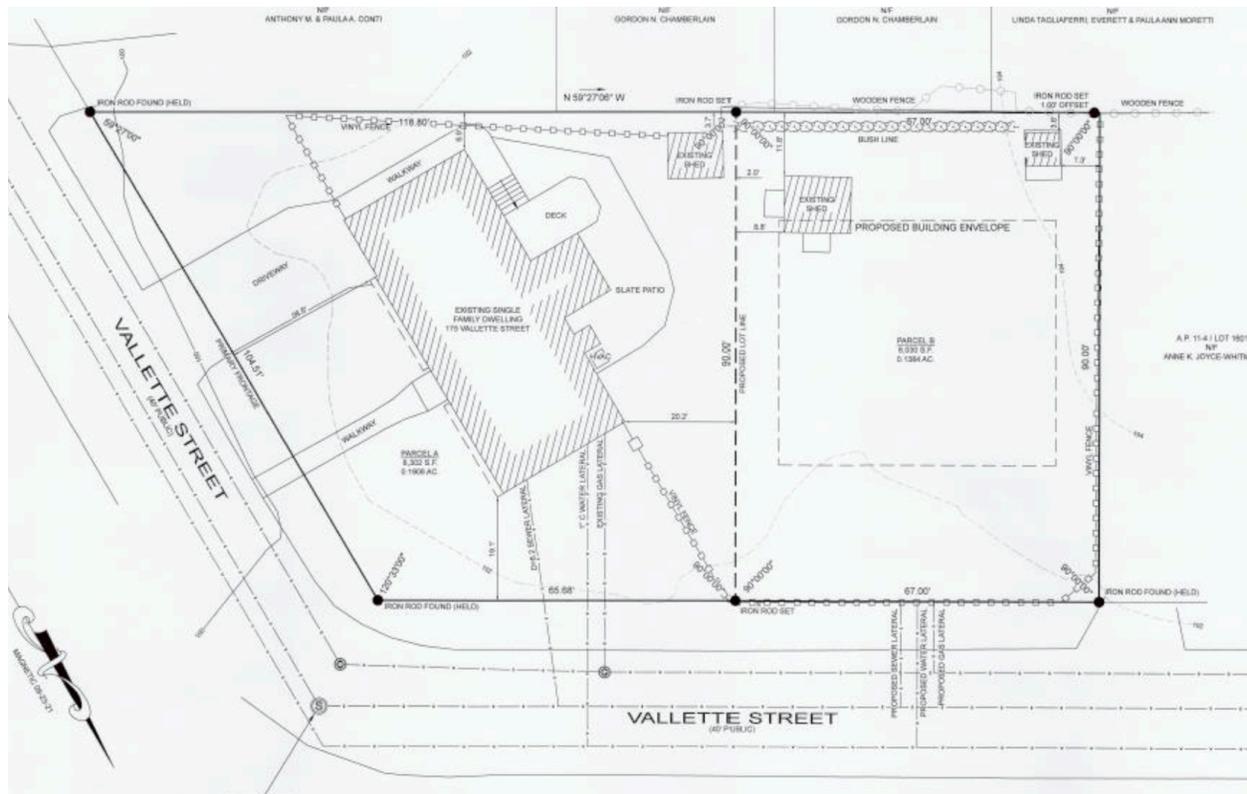
Parcel B - The referenced lot will contain approximately 6,030 square feet of overall land area, and approximately 67 linear feet of lot frontage along Vallette Street. Furthermore, the lot will realize a building envelope that complies with the A-6 District dimensional criteria. The lot will be rectangular in configuration, as anticipated by the Subdivision Regulations. The referenced lot and resulting building envelope will accommodate typical neighborhood architecture and massing. To reiterate, it too will realize full compliance with both the Subdivision and Ordinance Regulations.

The plan (illustrated on the following page) details all of the preceding information, as excerpted from the applicant's submission package. Therefore, to reiterate, it will not be out of character to subdivide the subject property into two-lots.

SUBDIVISION REGULATION CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS

The applicant proposes a two-lot minor subdivision development. The referenced parcels will be improved with single-family dwellings, the new dwelling to be constructed in accordance with surrounding architectural styles. A 'minor subdivision' is defined per Section II 'Definitions' of the Subdivision Regulations in the following manner.

Minor Subdivision - *"A plan for a subdivision of land consisting of five (5) or fewer units or lots, provided that such subdivision does not require waivers or modifications."*



The submission as presented, complies with the Subdivision Regulations. Furthermore, the Planning Commission should be advised that the proposed two-lot subdivision meets, and even exceeds in most instances, all of the dimensional requirements pertaining to both lot configuration and dwelling placement. The proposed subdivision does not necessitate any roadway improvements - all lots having direct frontage along Vallette Street. In order to attain Subdivision approval, the applicant must assure the Planning Board that all required findings pursuant to Section III.H 'Required Findings', of the Subdivision Regulations, are appropriately satisfied.

Required Findings: *"The requirement listed below shall be applicable to all subdivisions... submitted for approval... Prior to final approval of any subdivision... the Commission... shall make positive findings on all of the standards listed below..."*

1. *"Each subdivision... shall be consistent with the requirements of the City of Cranston Comprehensive Plan..."*

The Comprehensive Plan acknowledges support, as evidenced by the following.

Land Use Plan Element (Page 22)

Provide Opportunities in Eastern Cranston - "Underutilized properties and infill development sites could be improved to address current and future land use, transportation, and economic needs in the eastern part of the City..."

Encourage Neighborhood and Village Re-investment - ***"The zoning requirements for lot sizes within some of the older neighborhoods no longer reflect the prevailing smaller lot sizes. This renders an unusually large percentage of houses as "non-conforming" and requires homeowners to seek approval of the Zoning Board for even modest improvements. Matching zoning requirements more closely to the existing uses on the ground will encourage maintenance and reinvestment in the neighborhoods. In addition, after applying the proper design guidelines for new commercial development, new businesses and infill development within village centers could be encouraged with a streamlined permitting process."***

The Housing Plan Element (Page 57) also provides oriented guidance for the preservation and development of neighborhoods as the one in question.

Key Challenges - *"While Cranston approaches build-out of residential development and while some neighborhoods are 'aging', this Element focuses on ways to improve existing neighborhoods and proposes more efficient ways of utilizing the remaining land."*

o *"Existing residential neighborhoods, in both eastern and western Cranston, are stable and well maintained. Wholesale redevelopment of existing residential blocks would be disruptive and undesirable in most areas. **Instead, the regulatory environment and city programs should support the existing neighborhoods in terms of maintaining their character.**"*

o *"The need for reasonably affordable and diverse housing has become more apparent in the region. Housing costs for homeowners and renters have risen dramatically over the past four to five years making rents and mortgages unaffordable for a large percentage of the population. While there is no State mandate to address this issue, affordable housing projects would assist Cranston in maintaining its demographic diversity."*

Key Strategies - *"Reviving traditional development techniques and combining them with new environmental, transportation, economic development and housing concepts is the basis of Smart Growth. By adopting the principals of Smart Growth, housing, environmental protection, economic development, quality design, and transportation will be considered as integral components of future development project within the City. At the same time, preserving and supporting existing neighborhoods will improve livability and maintain community stability."*

Finally, the Natural Resources Plan Element recommends regulatory mechanisms that support the concentration of development in compact areas, thereby deterring development, and perhaps encouraging preservation, of more sensitive areas.

2. *"For subdivision, each lot shall conform to the standards and provisions of the Cranston Zoning Ordinance..."*

As has been evidenced throughout this report, both parcels will realize full dimensional compliance, to include the rear-yard setback in regard to the present single-family residence. Furthermore, the following General Purposes (Section 17.04.010) evidences the proposed two-lot minor subdivision's consistency with the Ordinance. The development agrees with all general purposes, however those that are specifically applicable are referenced below.

A. *"Promoting the public health, safety, morals and general welfare."*

B. *“Providing for a range of uses and intensities of use appropriate to the character of the city and reflecting current and expected future needs.”*

C. *“Providing for orderly growth and development which recognizes:*

1. *“The goals and patterns of land use contained in the comprehensive plan of the city...”*

6. *“The need to shape and balance urban and rural development.”*

7. *“The use of innovative development regulations and techniques.”*

H. *“Promoting a balance of housing choices, for all income levels and groups, to assure the health, safety and welfare of all citizens and their rights to affordable, accessible, safe, and sanitary housing.”*

K. *“Promoting a high level of quality in design in the development of private and public facilities.”*

L. *“Promoting implementation of the comprehensive plan of the city...”*

(3) *“There will be no significant negative environmental impacts from the proposed development as shown on the final plan, with all required conditions of approval.”*

(4) *“The subdivision 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.”*

Both parcels exceed the regulatory minimum lot area and lot frontage requirements. Furthermore, there are no constraints to the introduction of the proposed single-family dwelling. All public infrastructure, most notably water and sewer are available and will be accordingly connected. Finally, there are neither environmental nor physical constraints that would preclude the property from being subdivided and developed in the manner so proposed.

(5) *“All proposed...subdivision lots shall have adequate and permanent physical access to a public street.”*

The referenced lots will have direct and permanent physical access to the existing roadway network, namely Vallette Street.

(6) *“Each subdivision...shall provide for safe and adequate local circulation of pedestrian and vehicular through traffic, for adequate surface water run-off, for suitable building sites, and for preservation of natural, historical, or cultural features that contribute to the attractiveness of the community.”*

The entire subdivision is situated off of an existing road network, namely Vallette Street. Surface run-off / drainage will be regulated in accordance with City and State standards. There are no constraints to building construction or site placement. Soils are conducive to

residential development and building envelopes are more than adequate to accommodate a suitable living environment. The proposed residence will be placed such that it will reflect surrounding neighborhood character.

(7) "The design and location of street, building lots, utilities, drainage improvements and other improvements in each subdivision shall minimize flooding and soil erosion."

All infrastructure will be installed pursuant to the respective design standards. Therefore, any disturbances associated with the proposed development will be minimal, namely introduction of a single-family residential structure and associated accessory improvements - curb-cuts and driveways, as well as utility connection. Best Management Practices will be instituted during all phases of construction.

CONCLUSION

The applicant is entitled by right to subdivide the subject property. The development is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan as well as is in-keeping with the character of the surrounding neighborhood. There are no environmental or physical constraints to development. Therefore, the Planning Commission should not have any reservation in granting Subdivision approval.