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To: Cranston City Plan Commission, Cranston City Council
From: Kevin M. Flynn, Planning and Land Use consultant
Date: March 31, 2023
Regarding: Change of Zone application, Taco Products, Inc., d/b/a Taco Comfort Solutions

INTRODUCTION

I have been engaged with land use attorneys Ursillo, Teitz, and Ritch, Ltd., in coordination with the above referenced change of zone application. The property is located at 0 and 35 Carlsbad Street, assessors plat 7, lots 3141 and 3744.

I have reviewed the City of Cranston's 2012 Comprehensive Plan, along with the change of zone submission for this site, dated February 10, 2023. I have also conducted a site visit to this property, with which I am very familiar.

My resume is attached. I have 35 years of professional planning experience, including my 24 years of employment with the City of Cranston, 20 of which were in the capacity of city planning director. During that time, I oversaw considerable new development in the city, and the redevelopment of numerous projects, including but not limited to the Chapel View development (site of the former Training School for Boys), the Johnson and Wales campus at Field's Point, the major redevelopment of the Garden City Shopping Center, as well as the development of the former Narragansett Brewery site, and the Washington Secondary bike path, both of which abut the subject property.

Following my years with the City of Cranston, I served as Associate Director of the State of Rhode Island Division of Planning from 2005 to 2015, where, among other duties, I supervised the review and approval of municipal comprehensive plans, as well as several amendments to the state enabling statutes related to planning and land use.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF ZONE

Taco Products, Inc. (“Taco”) seeks to construct a 97,860 square foot warehousing and distribution facility on property located at the intersection of Carlsbad Street and Garfield Street, AP 7, lots 3141 and 3744. Carlsbad Street separates the property from the Taco manufacturing facility, located at 1160 Cranston Street. To the west of the site sits the Washington Secondary bike path, which provides a continuous off road bicycle and walking path to the village of Summit (Coventry). Beyond that sits the Falvey Linen Company. The Cranston Brewery Parkade abuts the bike path along Garfield Street. Taco also owns two parcels south of Burnham Street, AP 7, lots 1115 and 2985. The combined Taco property holdings consist of almost 14 acres.

The parcel proposed for development comprises 216,028 square feet, almost five acres. It is currently used for parking. Most of the property, approximately 80%, is currently zoned M-2, Industrial. The smaller portion, along Garfield Street, is zoned C-4, Highway Commercial. The application before the City seeks to change that zoning to M-2. The uses proposed for this development are permitted under M-2 zoning. No dimensional relief from zoning code requirements is requested, except for height relief which is necessary for efficient space utilization of the warehousing facility.

This currently zoned C-4 portion of lot 3141 is the only property between Carlsbad Street and the Washington Secondary Bike Path that is NOT zoned M-2 Industrial. Properties north of Garfield Avenue are all zoned Industrial, as are those to the south of Burnham Street, with the exception of this portion of AP 7, lot 3141.

The project would provide a total of 305 parking spaces for employees and visitors, and anticipates the addition of 16 full time employees. Currently Taco employs 207 employees, working over three shifts, with the first shift comprising the largest group (123 employees). The proposed parking is more than adequate for employees and guests.

The City of Cranston’s Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map anticipates that the zoning be changed to Industrial, as is being requested in this application (see attached map).

Taco Products Inc. sits in the former home of the Rhode Island Trolley Company, constructed in 1912. Taco makes heating and cooling products, which are

distributed nationally and internationally. It is one of Cranston's largest industrial employers, and has been in business for over 100 years. The company has a decades long reputation of charitable support to Rhode Island nonprofit entities, and is acknowledged as a major contributor to the funding of the arts in Rhode Island.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW

The City of Cranston Comprehensive plan was adopted in 2012, and served as an update of the plan done in 1992. The plan contains numerous goals and policies that are supportive of this change of zone application.

Economic Development Goal (EDG) 1A – Preserve and increase employment opportunities for Cranston residents.

EDG 1B – Maintain and increase the quality of job opportunities in terms of wages, skill requirements, and working conditions available to Cranston residents.

EDG 3 - Add to the City's taxable property base by constructing industrial and commercial structures which are properly designed and sited in keeping with environmental, planning, and design considerations.

EDG 4 – Revitalize underutilized areas of the city for uses that re in keeping with the needs and values of the community.

Economic Development Policy (EDP) 1.1 – Maintain, enhance and encourage diversification of the city's present manufacturing base.

EDP 1.4 -Provide assistance to socially and environmentally responsible enterprises, especially those that hire locally.

EDP 2.1 – Encourage the location and expansion of businesses with wide regional, nation, or international products.

EDP 2.2 Encourage existing businesses to develop export and/or internet based markets.

Land Use Goal (LUG 4) Ensure that sufficient land is properly zoned and provided with adequate infrastructure to provide for the City's future industrial development needs.

LUG 4.1 Maintain a current inventory of existing industrial facilities that could accommodate expansion and redevelopment; identify barriers to economic growth and the public actions necessary to preserve the existing industrial base.

Land Use Action Plan -24 Land Use /Zoning Consistency

Amend Zoning Map and Zoning Ordinance to eliminate inconsistencies.
between Future Land Use Map and Zoning.

The Comprehensive Plan also contains numerous text references that support this application for a zone change:

Page 22 – 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.

Page 73 – cites Traditional economic development goals:

Increase the tax base with new private investment in commercial and
Industrial properties.

Export new goods and services to regional populations.

Page 76 – cites 1992 Plan – Support for Export Businesses

The City should help its companies assess their ability to compete in
international markets and help them find resources to open such
markets.

Page 83 – Cranston’s available buildable land and its central location with Rhode Island will continue to provide advantages for potential manufacturing as well as distribution facilities.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

In my review of the plan, I could find no instances where this application would conflict with any of the plan’s goals, policies, objectives, or text. On the contrary, the application is supported by the numerous citations noted above.

The zone change to facilitate the construction of a warehouse and distribution facility will allow a long standing Cranston manufacturing facility with a tradition of excellence and community service to continue to prosper and grow.

The location of this property, in close proximity to Route 10 and Route 95 provides excellent highway access with minimal disruption to nearby residential areas.

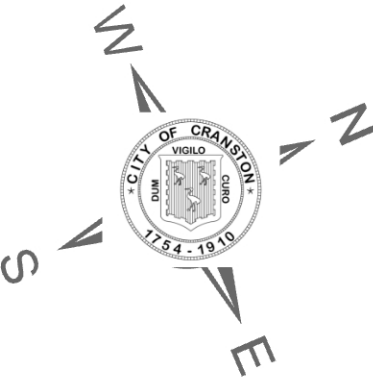
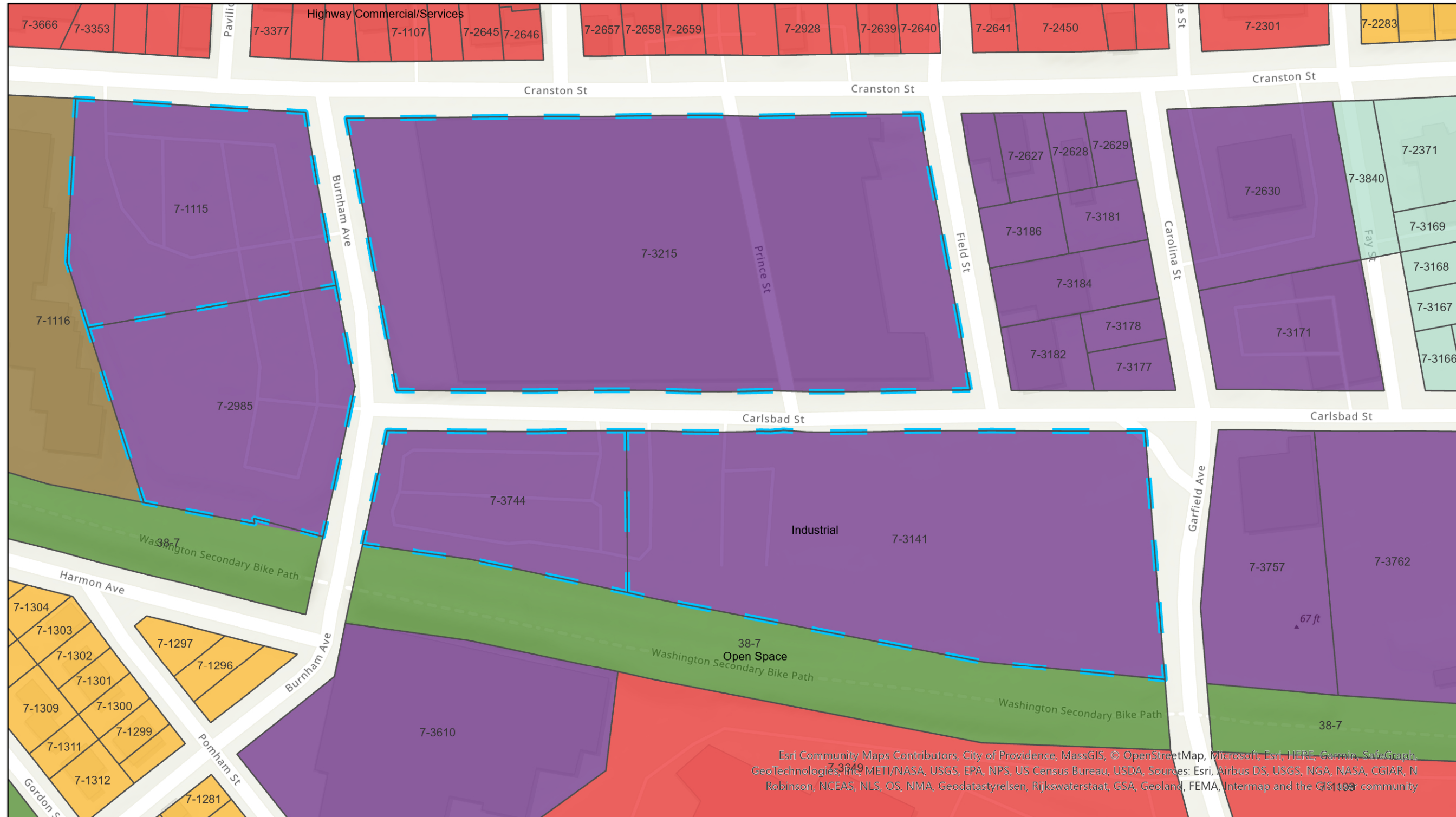
The proposed development is consistent with the City of Cranston Comprehensive Plan and presents no inconsistencies with that plan. Importantly, the zone change requested is entirely consistent with the plan's Future Land Use Map. The proposed amendment would eliminate an existing inconsistency between the FLUM and a portion of the site's current zoning.

For all the reasons cited above, I would strongly urge the City Plan Commission and the City Council to approve this change of zone application.





Taco Properties - Future Land Use March 2023



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Legend

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| Taco Properties | Highway Commercial/Services | Neighborhood Commercial/Services | Single Family Residential 3.63 To 1 Unit Per Acre | Special Redevelopment Area |
| Parcels | Industrial | Open Space | Single Family Residential 7.26 To 3.64 Unit Per Acre | Water |
| Future Land Use | Mixed Plan Development | Residential Less Than 10.39 Units Per Acre | Single Family Residential Less Than 1 Unit Per Acre | |
| Governmental/Institutional | Multifamily | Right Of Way | Single/Two Family Residential Less Than 10.89 Units Per Acre | |

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CLIENT INFO:

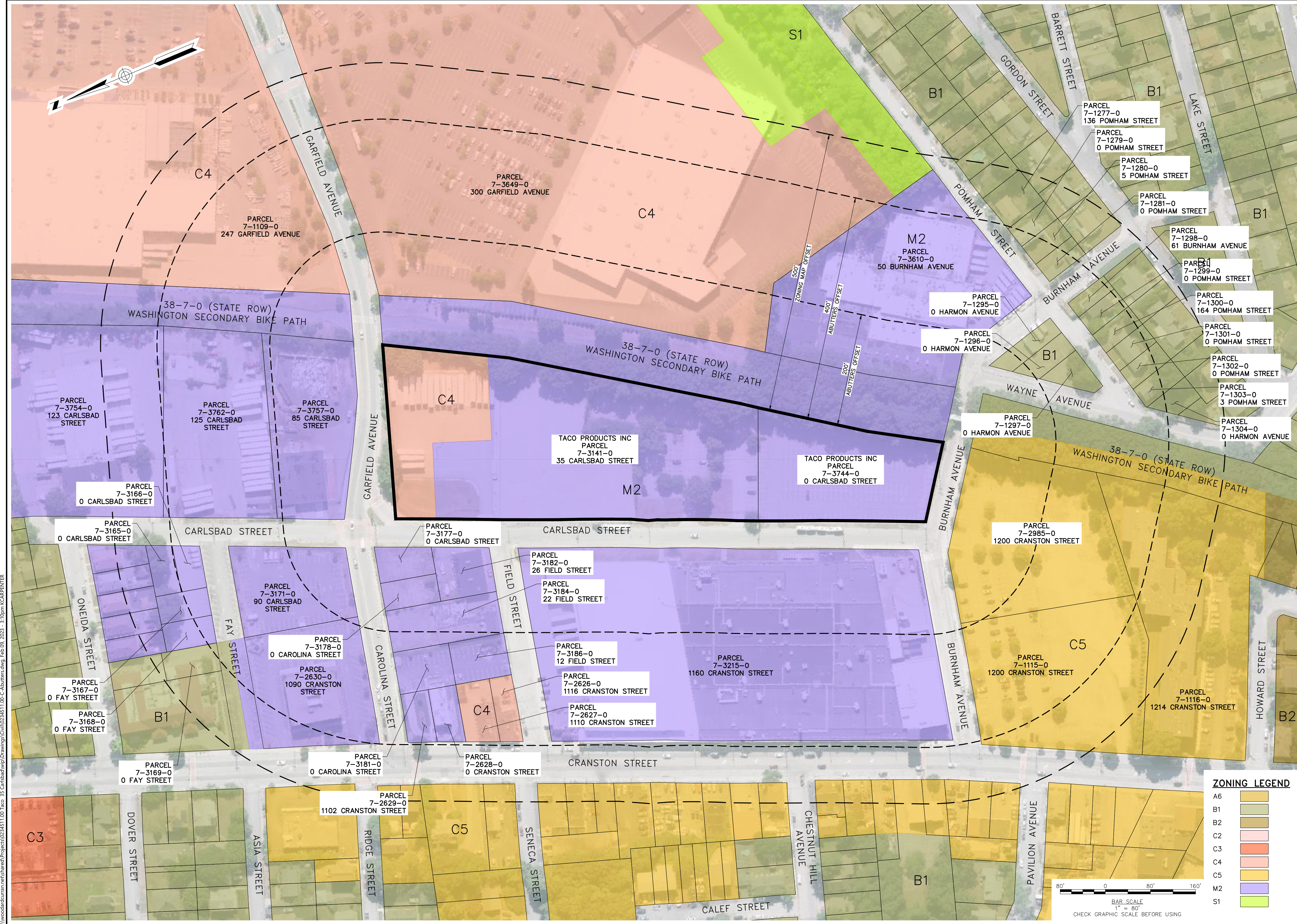
TACO, INC.
1160 CRANSTON STREET,
CRANSTON, RI 02920
35 CARLSBAD BUILDING

REV MM/DD/YY DESCRIPTION

JOB NO:	0234511.00
DATE:	1/25/2023
SCALE:	1" = 80'
DESIGNED BY:	JBC
DRAWN BY:	JBC
CHECKED BY:	JG
FILENAME:	0234511.00-C-ABUTTERS.dwg

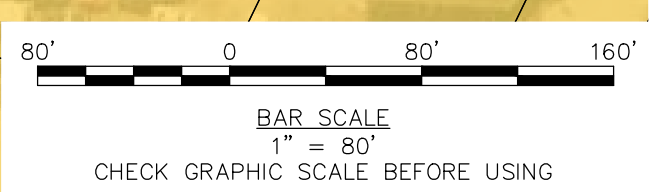
DRAWING TITLE:
**CIVIL
ABUTTERS & ZONING MAP**

DRAWING NO:
ABUTTERS
SHEET: OF



ZONING LEGEND

- A6
- B1
- B2
- C2
- C3
- C4
- C5
- M2
- S1



\\woodardcurran.com\shared\Projects\0234511.00-C-Abutters.dwg, Feb 09, 2023 - 3:10pm KCAREENTER

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2005-2015 Associate Director, State of Rhode Island, Division of Planning

1981-2005 Cranston, Rhode Island, City Planning Director, and other positions

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2005-2015 Associate Director, RI Division of Planning; Managed all aspects of the Division of Planning, supervising a staff of 32 as outlined below:

Responsible for the maintenance and updating of all aspects of the State Guide Plan, including the State's long range Transportation Plan, and shorter term Transportation Improvement Plan. Managed the state review process for state mandated local comprehensive plans to insure their consistency with the State Guide Plan. Managed the process of rewriting the state's enabling statutes related to comprehensive planning. Managed all aspects of land use planning at the state level, including such diverse activities as water supply planning, housing, renewable energy, open space and agricultural lands preservation, solid waste planning, among others. Provided assistance to RI municipalities in land use activities. Oversaw activities related to the state's Geographic Information Systems program, RIGIS. Managed the distribution and oversight of the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG) for the state's non entitlement cities, including various rounds of additional funding related to disaster recovery.

1981-2005 City of Cranston, Rhode Island

Served in progressively responsible staff roles with the city's Planning Department, including as Director from 1985-2005. Responsible for major development initiatives including the redevelopment of the former Narragansett Brewery property, the Johnson and Wales campus at Fields Point, and the former Training School for Boys as a 400,000 square foot mixed use project known as Chapel View. Rewrote the City's Comprehensive Plan in 1992, its first update since 1975. Prepared the annual Capital Budget and 5 year Capital Improvement Program for the City. Oversaw the development of thousands of new residential housing units, predominantly in the western portion of the city, Leveraged municipal open space funds through partnerships with the State of Rhode Island and the Champlin Foundation and Nature Conservancy, resulting in the

preservation of over 350 acres of farmland and open space. Made countless presentations at various public venues (Planning Commission, City Council, and other legislative hearings). Worked successfully with 4 Mayors and 13 City Councils.

EDUCATION

University of Rhode Island – Masters of Community Planning 1980

University of Massachusetts, Amherst Bachelor of Arts 1975, member Phi Beta Kappa 1975, University de Paris, Sorbonne 1973-1974

ACTIVITIES / AFFILIATIONS

Warwick Planning Board, member since 2021, currently serve as vice chair.

Access Point Rhode Island (formerly Cranston ARC), board member since 2011, Chair of Board since 2006

Common Cause Rhode Island, board member since 2008, Chair of the Policy Committee since 2010

Cranston Arts Commission, member 2017-2020

YMCA of Greater Providence Board of Directors 2006-2013, Chairman of Cranston Board branch 2010

Adjunct Faculty Member, Graduate Curriculum in Community Planning and Area Development 1992-2006; taught courses in land development and studio practicum, in Kingston and Providence campuses