

City Planning Department



Memo

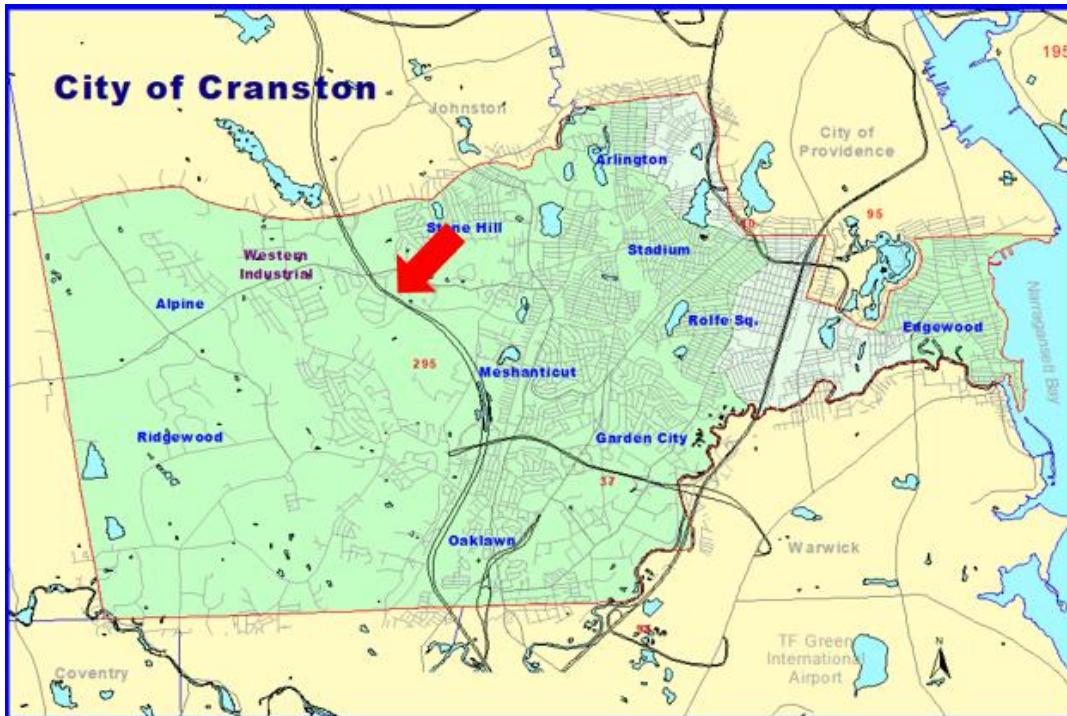
To: Cranston City Plan Commission
From: Joshua Berry, AICP - Senior Planner / Administrative Officer
Date: April 29, 2021
Re: Dimensional Variance @ 0 Elite Drive and 0 Janet Drive

Owner: Michael J. Spagnole & Irene A. Antonelli
Applicant: David M. Devany
Location: Elite Drive and Janet Drive, AP 26/4, Lot 50
Zone: A-20 (Single-family dwellings on lots of minimum areas of 20,000 ft²)
FLU: Single Family Residential 3.63 to 1 unit per acre

DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE REQUESTS:

1. To create four lots with substandard frontage. [Section 17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity]
2. To create three lots with substandard lot width. [Section 17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity]

LOCATION MAP



ZONING MAP

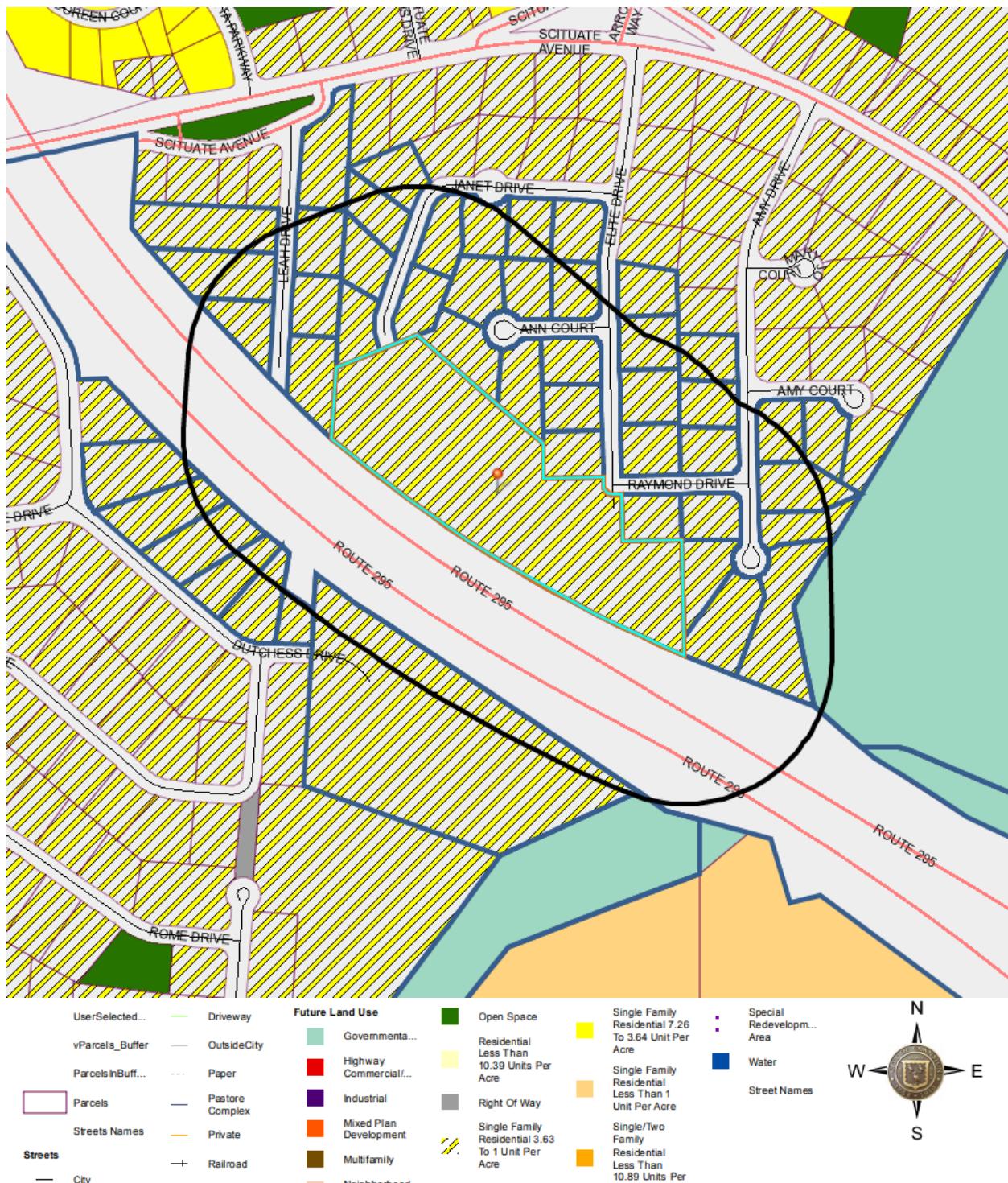


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City of Cranston

FUTURE LAND USE MAP



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AERIAL VIEW



3-D AERIAL VIEW (facing south)



SITE PLAN (snippet)



STREET VIEW
(Elite Drive facing south)



STREET VIEW (Janet Drive facing south)



FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The owner/applicant proposes to subdivide an existing 7.48 +/- acre lot into four (4) lots for the purpose of creating buildable lots intended for single-family development under A-20 zoning. The following table includes each proposed lots' frontage, lot width, and area.

	Frontage (125' Required)	Width (125' Required)	Area (20,000 ft ² Required)
Lot 1	25'	72'	67,218 ft²
Lot 2	25'	72'	50,702 ft²
Lot 3	50'	57'	84,586 ft²
Lot 4	39' *	(compliant -dimension not provided)	123,372 ft²

*Lot 4 has 140' of frontage on a public right-of-way, but a large portion of this right-of-way is not improved with a public street and thereby does not qualify towards street frontage.

2. The subject parcel is located in Eastern Cranston (speaking in general terms, but more specifically described as north-central Cranston) in the section of the Stone Hill neighborhood that is enclosed by I-295 to the west, Scituate Avenue to the north and the Providence Water Supply Board Headquarters/office/pump station to the east. The entire abutting neighborhood is zoned A-20 and has been developed and platted for conforming single-family lots. The subject property is the last/only undeveloped parcel in the neighborhood.
3. The lot is currently undeveloped and vegetated. There is a wetland area in the southeastern corner of the subject property. There is also an intermittent stream just off the southern property line which runs along I-295. This stream has a 100' riverbank wetland buffer that runs through the subject site, roughly parallel to the property line. Relief would allow the subdivision design to stay as far away from the wetlands and associated buffers as possible.

4. The subdivision is less dense than the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map allocation of Single Family Residential 3.63 To 1 Unit Per Acre with a proposed density of 0.53 units per acre. **The proposed use (single-family residential) and density are both consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.**
5. The proposed subdivision design offers desired attributes that normally associated with conservation subdivisions which are identified in the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element such as encouraging more efficient development that is less sprawling, minimizing the disturbance to wetlands and existing topography and programming the extension of utilities and road improvements. The Comprehensive Plan states that “subdivision design should be based on its resource quality and livability, and should also allow flexibility in the dimensional standards (emphasis added) and building types” (p. 67).
6. The Department of Public Works has voiced support of the subdivision design as to avoid the extension of Elite Drive and Janet Drive, thereby minimizing the city’s responsibility to maintain and plow the roads as well as to avoid the extension of sewer and water utilities.

PLANNING ANALYSIS

The Elite Drive Subdivision would be a by-right proposal if relief were not required for the substandard frontage for the four proposed lots and lot width for proposed Lots 1, 2 & 3. There is the possibility that the subdivision could be redesigned to comply, and therefore one may question whether the hardship is self-imposed – however, there are some important factors that should be considered in determining whether the request is warranted.

The purpose of the relief is to allow the subdivision to be possible without the extension of Elite Drive and Janet Drive, an effort to conserve resources that is encouraged both by DPW and the Planning Department. The existing frontage is sufficient for the four lots to connect individual driveways, therefore the sole purpose of extending the road is to comply with the A-20 zoning requirements. It is important to consider that all four of the proposed lots far exceed the 20,000 ft² minimum in A-2. The lots exceed the minimum area by 336% (Lot 1), 253% (Lot 2), 423% (Lot 3), and 617% (Lot 4) for an average of 407% of the minimum lot area per lot.

Due to the size of the proposed lots, the subdivision is less dense than the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map allocation of Single Family Residential 3.63 To 1 Unit Per Acre with a proposed density of 0.53 units per acre. **The proposed use (single-family residential) and density are both consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.**

In addition to consistency in terms of use and density, staff finds that the proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policies found in the Housing Element. The proposed subdivision design offers beneficial and desired attributes of conservation subdivisions that are specifically identified on page 66:

- Encourage a more efficient form of development that is less sprawling, consumes less open land, and conforms to existing topography and natural features;

- Minimize the total amount of disturbance on a site which preserves the natural topography of a site;
- Allow for the construction and maintenance of roadways, utilities, and services in a more economical and efficient manner.

Admittedly, the proposal is not technically a conservation subdivision, but staff holds that the above-listed benefits offered by the design are still relevant and consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, which states that “subdivision design should be based on its resource quality and livability, **and should also allow flexibility in the dimensional standards**” (emphasis added) and building types. . . the Planning Department should work with developers to create successful plans by using flexible standards” (p. 67). Staff urges the Plan Commission to support the requests for relief to allow flexibility in the dimensional standards to minimize the disturbance to the environment, neighborhood, and public utilities & resources.

Recommendation

Due to the fact that the application is consistent with the Cranston Comprehensive Plan and the design minimizes the impacts of the subdivision, staff recommends the Plan Commission forward a **positive recommendation** on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.