

City Planning Department



Memo

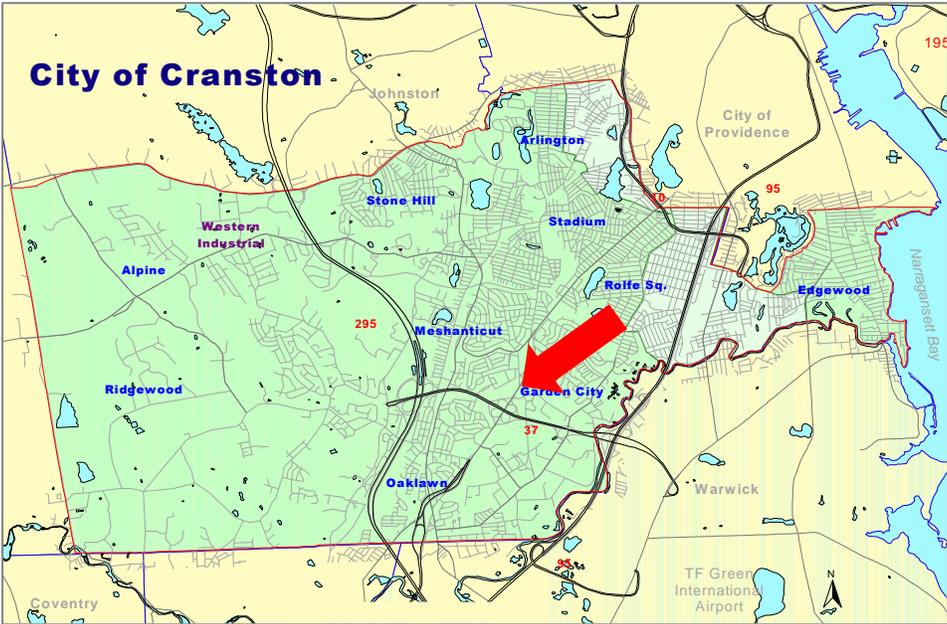
To: Cranston City Plan Commission
From: Doug McLean, AICP, Principal Planner
Date: January 28, 2021
Re: Variance Application for 1155 Pontiac Avenue – Vehicle Stacking for Burger King

Owner: Renaissance Development Corp.
Applicant: B&F Construction
Location: 1155 Pontiac Avenue (AP 10-4, Lot 1502)
Zone: C-4 (Highway business)
FLU: Commercial/Highway Services

DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE REQUEST:

- 1. To allow two (2) drive-in lanes that do not contain the required 6 stacking spaces each [17.28.010 - Drive-in Uses]

LOCATION MAP

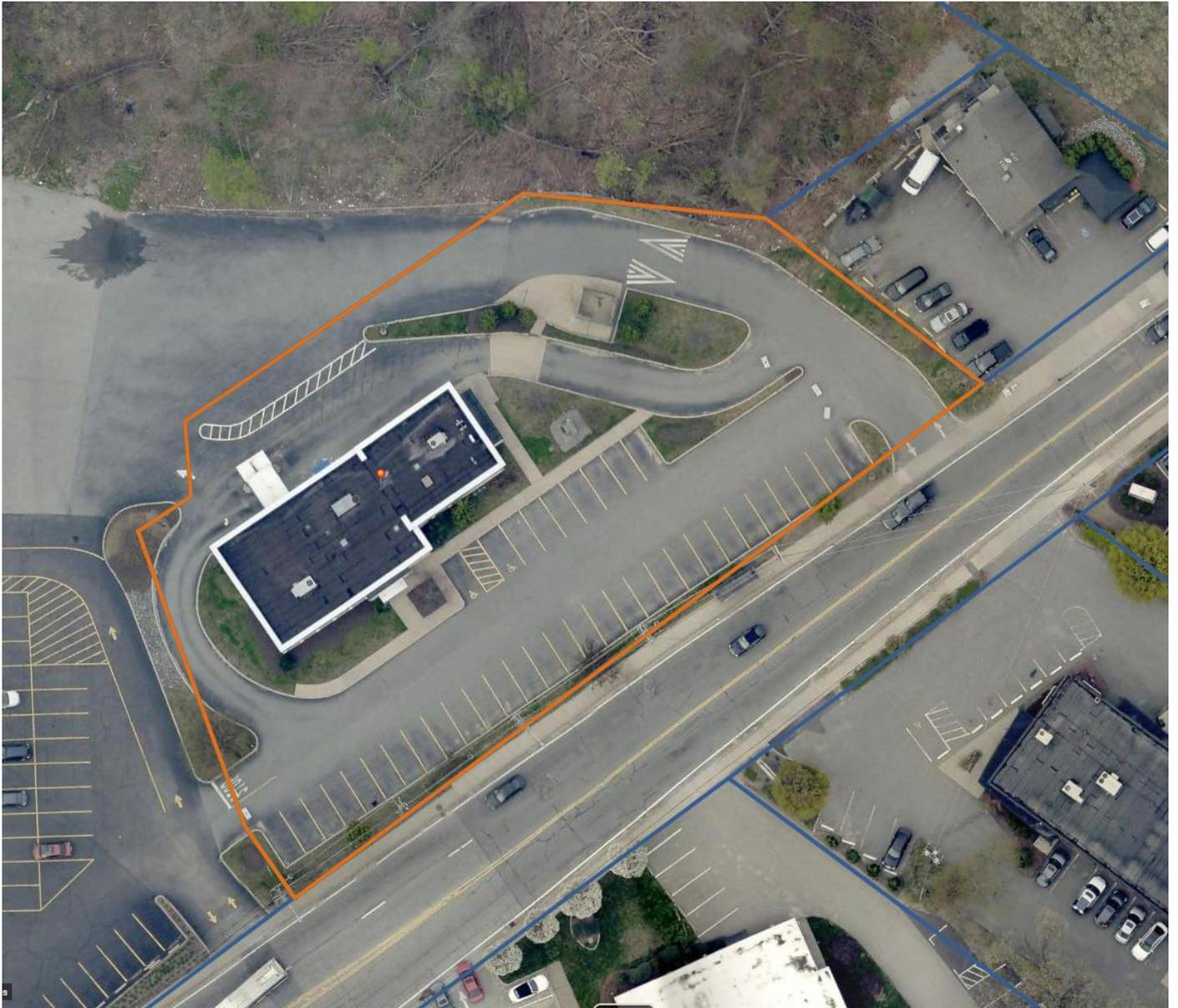


NEIGHBORHOOD AERIAL

(subject parcels marked in orange, 400 foot radius marked in black)



AERIAL CLOSE UP



3-D AERIAL VIEW



STREET VIEW (from Phenix Ave)



STREET VIEW
(north east entrance from Pontiac Ave)



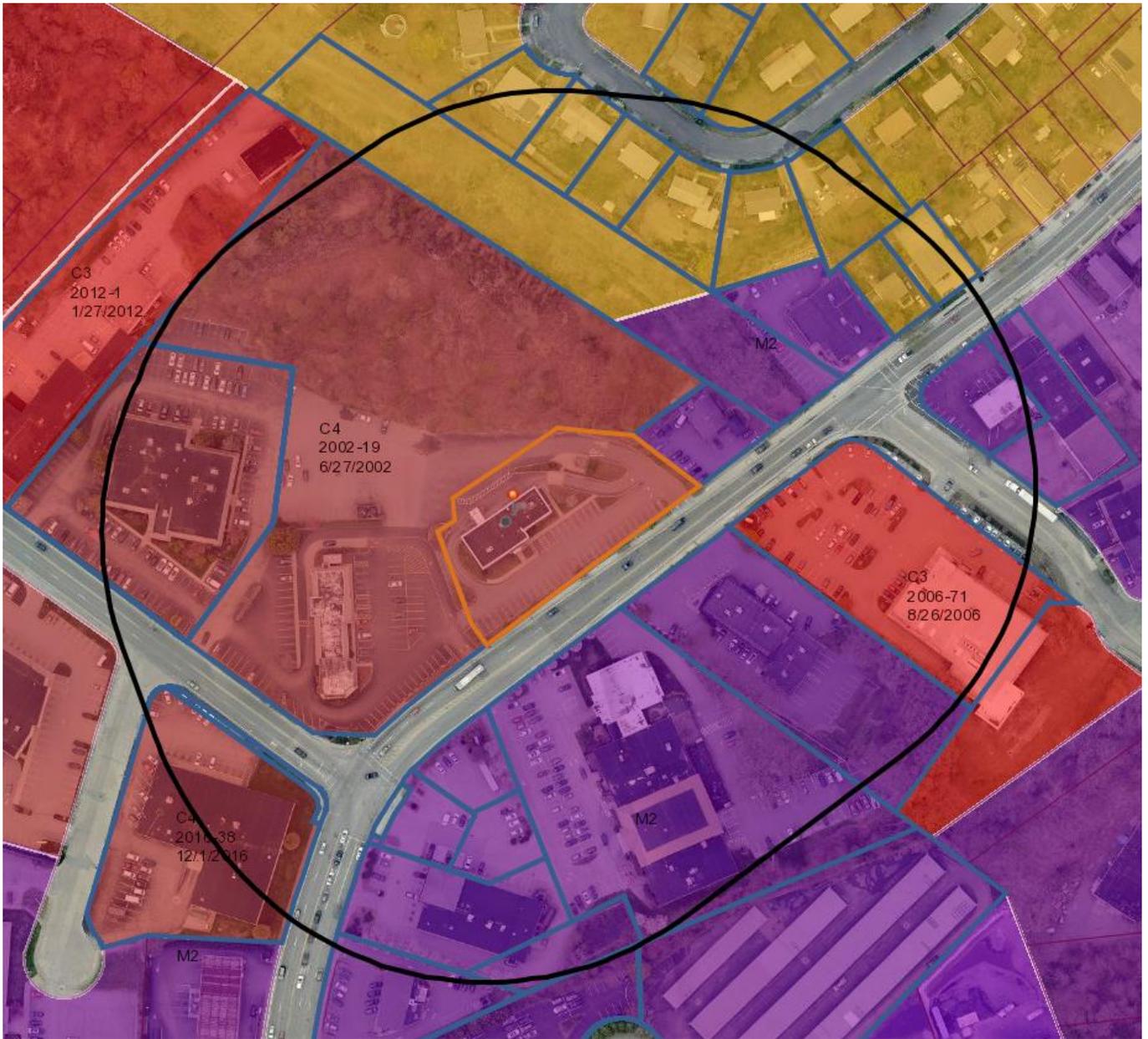
**STREET VIEW
(front of building)**



STREET VIEW (back of building)



ZONING MAP



FURURE LAND USE MAP



FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The applicant, B&F Construction, proposes to establish a Burger King branch location at 1155 Pontiac Avenue, the site of a former Webster Bank.
2. The overall redevelopment proposal will include the conversion of the existing bank building into a Burger King without changes to the building footprint. The Webster Bank building, which itself a former Krispy Kreme donut shop, has an existing drive-through lane leading to the rear of the building.
3. The proposal includes the following site plan changes:
 - Adding a second drive-thru order point;
 - Moving the 2 order points to new menu boards that are detached from the building;
 - Minor adjustment to dumpster location;
 - Changes to portico in back of building to facilitate drive-thru pick-up window, and
 - Extending an interior site sidewalk to facilitate pedestrian safety and mobility.
4. The applicant is proposing to redevelop the site while also minimizing site disturbance to the greatest degree possible through utilizing the existing footprint of the building, existing parking area, existing landscaping, and existing site circulation pattern. The area of the property that is subject to any site disturbances (menu boards, drive-thru lanes, dumpster enclosure, and sidewalk) are shown with a dashed line around it on the site plan shown on page 7.
5. The lot is zoned C-4 (Highway business) and contains approximately 43,056 +/- square feet. The use of a drive-thru restaurant is allowed by-right in the C-4 zone.
6. The applicant was before the Development Plan Review Committee on December 16, 2020 as a required pre-application. The DPR application has been noticed for a Preliminary Plan Development Plan Review decision on February 3, 2021. This application has been well-vetted for technical issues and at this point DRP approval is anticipated at their upcoming meeting.
7. The applicant is seeing relief from Zoning Code Sec 17.28, as follows:

“Stacking Spaces. All drive-in uses shall provide stacking spaces for a minimum of six automobiles for each drive-in window. Stacking spaces shall be designed so as not to interfere with points of access to or from streets. Location of stacking spaces shall not interfere with entry to or exit from parking spaces. For automobile washing businesses, additional stacking spaces may be required at the exit of the auto wash structure.”
8. For the purpose of this application, a “drive-in window” is interpreted to be equivalent to a menu order board. The applicant is providing 9 stacking spaces for the two order boards, whereas the code requires a combined 12 stacking spaces. Therefore, the applicant is seeking relief for falling short by a total of 3 stacking spaces.
9. It is understood that adding a second order point is intended to make the drive-thru operation more efficient, so that the average customer is able to move through the drive-

thru operation quicker than if only 1 order point was provided. However, the City's zoning code assumes that every order point should have the same number of stacking spaces regardless of how many order points are provided. Staff finds that adding a second order point will not increase the number of customers at the site, and instead will lead to more efficient movement of existing customers through the drive-thru lanes.

10. The applicant has provided a traffic memo and supplemental information as part of the DPR review process that demonstrate, in general terms, the use will not result in a detrimental impact to the surrounding street network.
11. **NOTE – AWAITING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Staff has requested supplementary information from the applicant to demonstrate that the vehicle stacking at the drive-thru line will not back up to the point where it would interfere with traffic on Pontiac Avenue. This would be inclusive of consideration of peak volume and consideration of the average turnaround time to move through the drive-thru line. The applicant has not provided this information as of this memo (January 29, 2021). The applicant is actively working with their traffic engineer and other franchise professionals in order to address this point and anticipates providing satisfactory information prior to the Plan Commission memo.
12. The Future Land Use Map designation for this property is Commercial/Highway Services which supports the general use of a drive-thru restaurant. The Comprehensive Plan does not have any specific policies or information regarding drive-thru operations. However, the overall content of the Plan, particularly within the Land Use and Economic Development Elements, encourages the City to support efficient use of properties while minimizing negative impacts to the neighborhood. Staff finds that this proposal is consistent with the general content of the Comprehensive Plan.

PLANNING ANALYSIS:

The applicant is proposing to redevelop the site (former Webster Bank) while also minimizing site disturbance to the greatest extent practical through utilizing the existing footprint of the building, existing parking area, existing landscaping, and existing site circulation pattern. This has been a primary factor in driving the site's conceptual design and the need for a variance. The City's zoning code assumes that every order point should have the same number of stacking spaces. Staff finds that adding a second order point will not increase the number of customers at the site, and instead will lead to more efficient movement of existing customers through the drive-thru lanes. Assuming the applicant provides supplementary information as discussed in FINDING #11 above, staff finds that the proposed design will not create an undue traffic nuisance to interior site circulation or surrounding neighborhood.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION:

This recommendation is being left in draft format as we are awaiting supplemental information from the applicant as discussed in FINDING #11. Assuming the information arrives prior to the Plan Commission meeting and is satisfactory to staff, the following DRAFT recommendation is provided as reference.

Due to the finding that the application is consistent with the general content of the Comprehensive Plan, and due to the finding that the application will not create undue traffic impacts to the surrounding streets, staff recommends the Plan Commission forward a **positive recommendation** to the Zoning Board of Review.