

# City Planning Department



## Memo

To: Cranston City Plan Commission  
From: Alexander Berardo – Planning Technician  
Date: February 3, 2023  
Re: **Dimensional Variance @ 1350 Oaklawn Avenue**

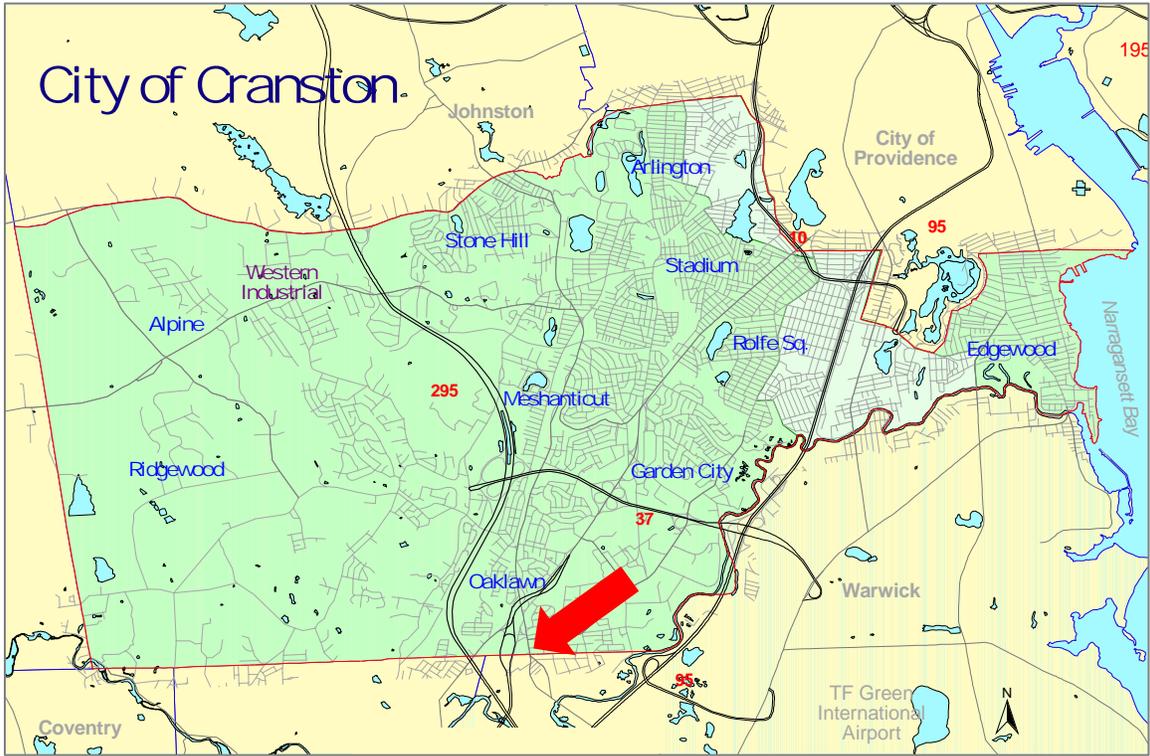
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**Owners:** Christy, LLC and Marley Rose, LLC  
**Applicant:** Christy, LLC  
**Location:** 1350 Oaklawn Avenue, AP 15, Lot 47  
**Zone:** C-4 (Highway Business)  
**FLU:** Highway Commercial Services

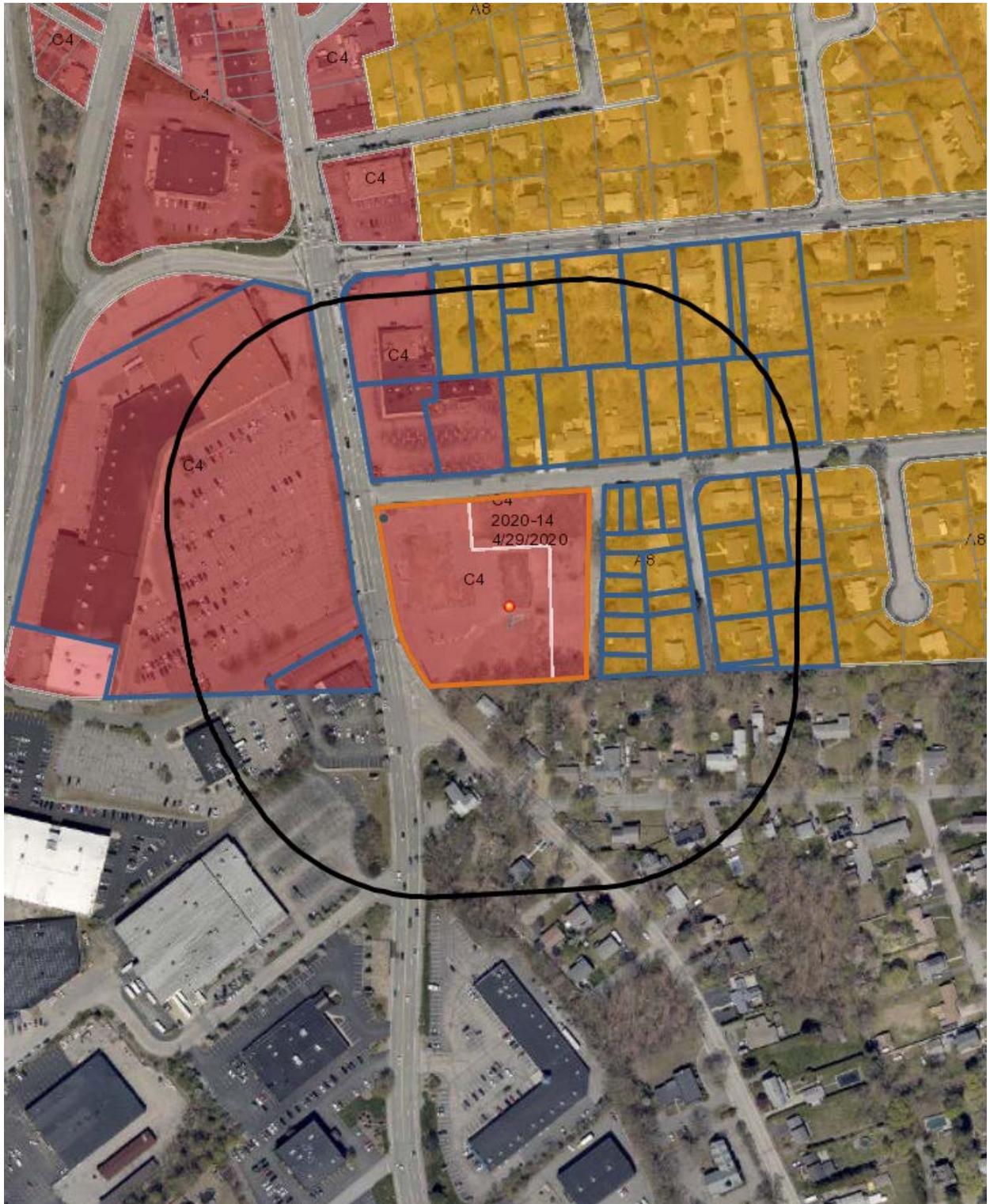
### **DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE REQUEST:**

1. To allow six signs (one monument sign and five wall signs) to be installed in a new shopping plaza which require relief for the following reasons: [17.72.010 – Signs]
  - The proposed signage exceeds the 300 ft<sup>2</sup> limit on sign area for the entire site in a C-4 zone (total of 561.08 ft<sup>2</sup> proposed).
  - Three of the five proposed wall signs exceed the 30 ft<sup>2</sup> maximum area in the code (proposed sizes are 36.61 ft<sup>2</sup>, 115.69 ft<sup>2</sup>, and 150.78 ft<sup>2</sup>).
  - The proposed pylon sign exceeds the 50 ft<sup>2</sup> maximum area (proposing 198 ft<sup>2</sup>) and the 15-foot maximum height (proposing 22 ft)
  - The pylon sign includes an electronic message board component, which is not an explicitly-allowed sign type in the C-4 zone.
  - The applicant has also requested relief in this application for a potential third wall sign of up to 125 ft<sup>2</sup> for a future third tenant.

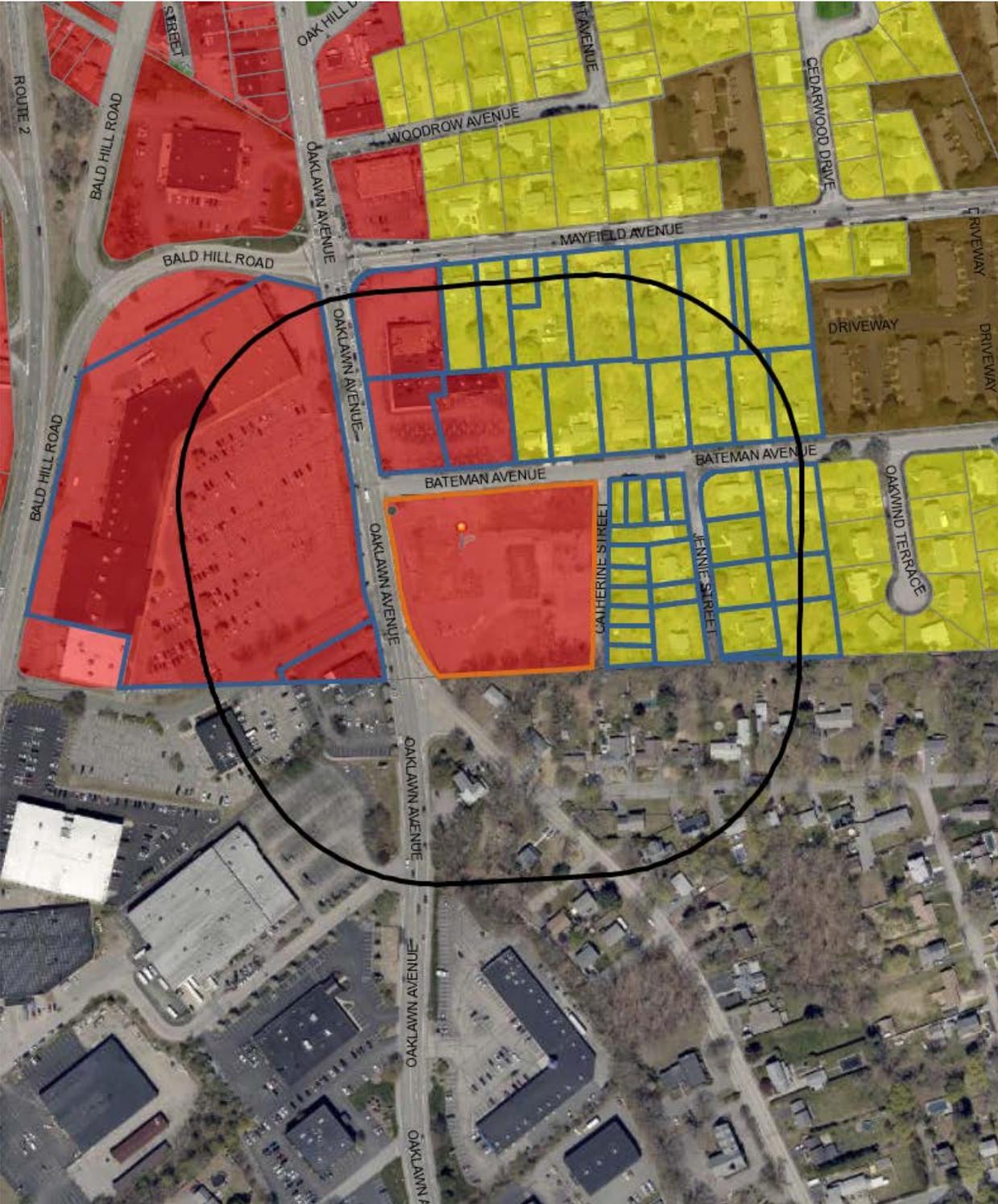
# LOCATION MAP



# ZONING MAP



# FUTURE LAND USE MAP



# AERIAL VIEW



# 3-D AERIAL VIEW (facing north)



# STREET VIEW



# SITE PLAN (Excerpt)





## PLANNING STAFF FINDINGS

1. The subject parcel (AP 15, Lot 47) is located on a conforming corner lot of 124,581 ft<sup>2</sup> in a C-4 zone on Oaklawn Avenue.
2. The applicant is constructing a two-building shopping plaza on the site and seeks to install six signs, five of which would be wall signs and one of which would be a monument sign to be located near Oaklawn Avenue.
3. The applicant requires relief for overall sign area covering the entire plaza; for individual sign areas for three (potentially four) wall signs to be located on the larger of the two buildings in the plaza; and for sign height, area, and type (due to the inclusion of an LED/electronic message board component) for the monument sign.
4. The applicant does not require dimensional relief for the two wall signs proposed to be installed on the smaller of the two buildings, a future BankRI branch.
5. The larger of the two buildings will be set back approximately 220 feet from Oaklawn Avenue.
6. All parcels with frontage on Oaklawn Avenue within a 400-foot radius of (and including) the subject parcel are zoned C-4 (Highway Business) and have a Future Land Use Map designation of Highway Commercial Services.
7. Although monument and freestanding signs are more prevalent along Oaklawn Avenue beginning about a quarter-mile north of the subject parcel, the only notable example within a 400-foot radius is located at the shopping plaza across the street, and it does not contain an electronic component.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

The Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Principle 4 advises to "*Protect the natural, historic and visual resources that define the neighborhoods*" (p.34). Staff generally agrees with the applicant's assertion in the Project Narrative that the wall signs are "proportional to the site and buildings" and does not believe these signs would have a substantial negative impact on the visual resources of the neighborhood, particularly as they would be located on a building set back more than 200 feet from the road on a site fronting on Oaklawn Avenue, which is highway-commercial in character.

However, Staff does believe the inclusion of the proposed monument sign on site would negatively impact the remaining visual resources of the neighborhood (such as they are on a commercial strip). Staff would underscore that the critical factor is not the monument sign itself – other sections of Oaklawn Avenue commonly feature monument signs and one such example is located directly across the street – but rather that the sign exceeds the height (147% taller), area (396% larger), and type (electronic message board) limitations beyond the point of proportionality to the site and its surrounding context.

## RECOMMENDATION

Due to the finding that the application requests relief for different types of signs that exceed dimensional standards to varying degrees, and that some sign types would alter the character of the neighborhood as proposed while others would not, staff recommends the Plan Commission forward **no specific recommendation** on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.