

City Planning Department



Memo

To: Cranston City Plan Commission
From: Joshua Berry, AICP - Senior Planner / Administrative Officer
Date: May 28, 2021
Re: **Dimensional Variance @ 15 Connecticut Street & 0 Connecticut Street**

Owner/App: Angelo E. Muccio & Rosa M. Muccio
Location: 15 Connecticut Street, AP 8/1, Lots 2331
Zone: A-6 (Single-family dwellings on lots of minimum areas of 6,000 ft²)
FLU: Single/Two Family Residential Less than 10.89 units/acre

There are two docketed matters for two separate proposed lots – but as both are part of the Cranston Highlands Minor Subdivision application, this memo will cover both variance applications.

DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE REQUESTS:

15 Connecticut St – AP 8 Lot 2331 (Proposed Parcel A)

1. To allow a subdivision which would cause an existing two-family residence on an undersized lot [Section 17.20.0120 – Schedule of Intensity]

0 Connecticut St – AP 8 Lot 2331 (Proposed Parcel B)

2. To allow a subdivision resulting in an undersized lot. [Section 17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity]
3. To allow a subdivision resulting in a lot with insufficient frontage. [Section 17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity]
4. To allow a subdivision resulting in a lot with insufficient lot width. [Section 17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity]

ZONING MAP



UserSelectedParcels	Zoning	B2	EI
vParcels_Buffer	none	C1	MPD
ParcelsInBufferOutput	A80	C2	S1
Parcels	A20	C3	Other
Streets Names	A12	C4	Street Names
Zoning Dimensions	A8	C5	Red: Red
Historic Overlay District	A6	M1	Green: Green
	B1	M2	Blue: Blue

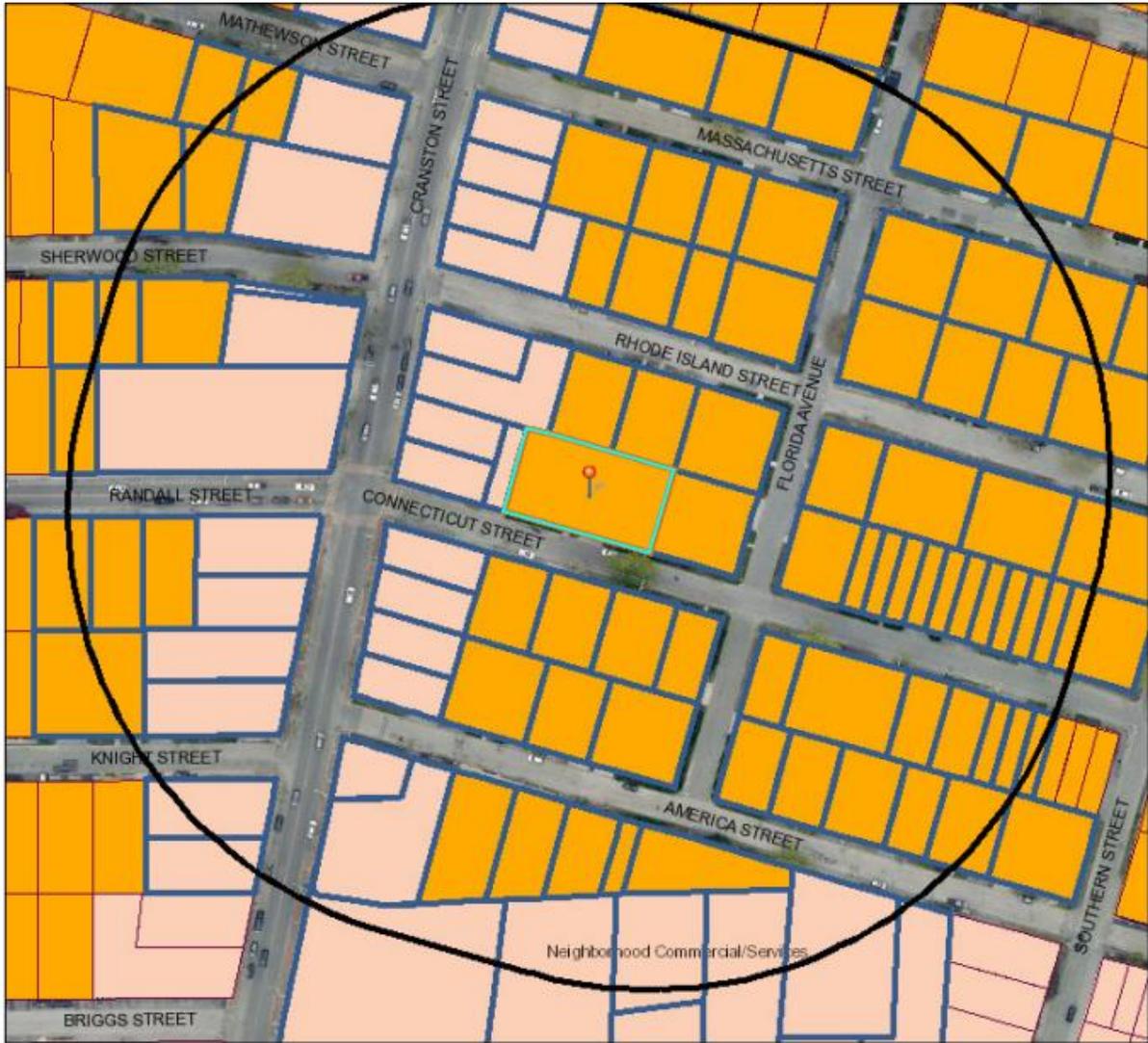


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FUTURE LAND USE MAP

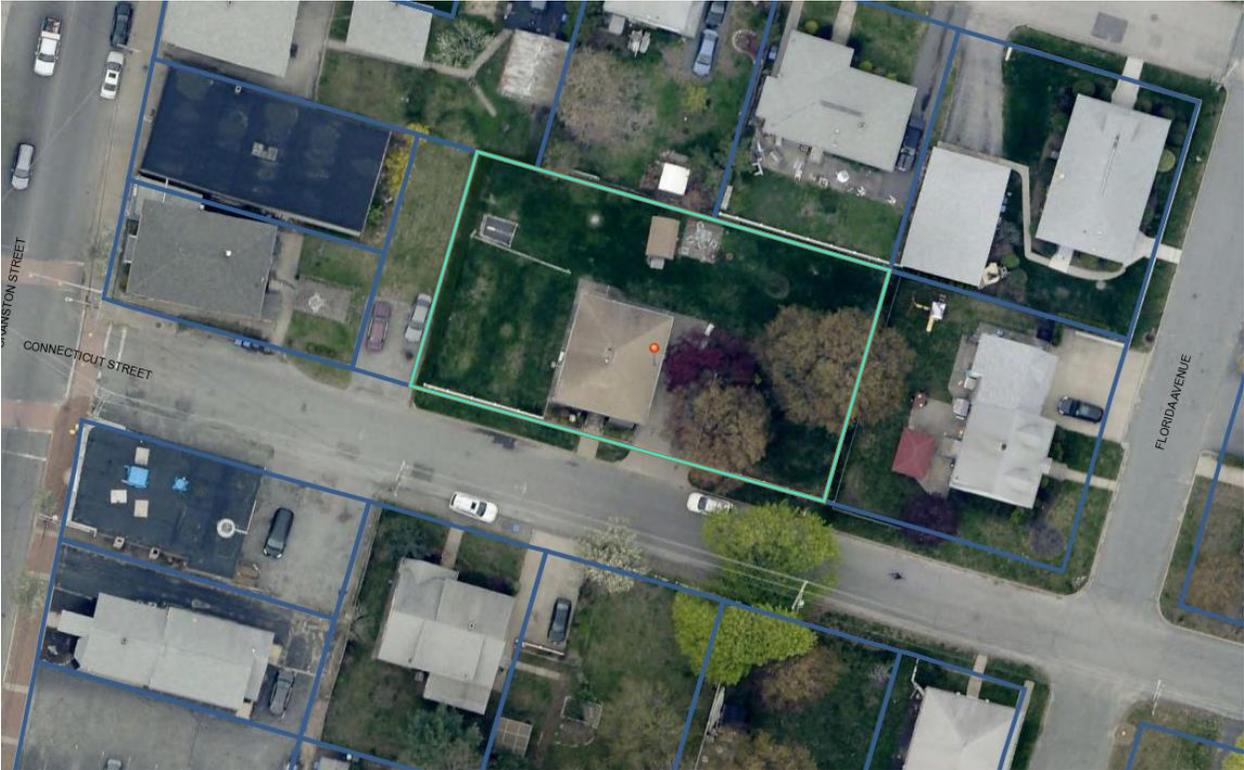


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AERIAL VIEW



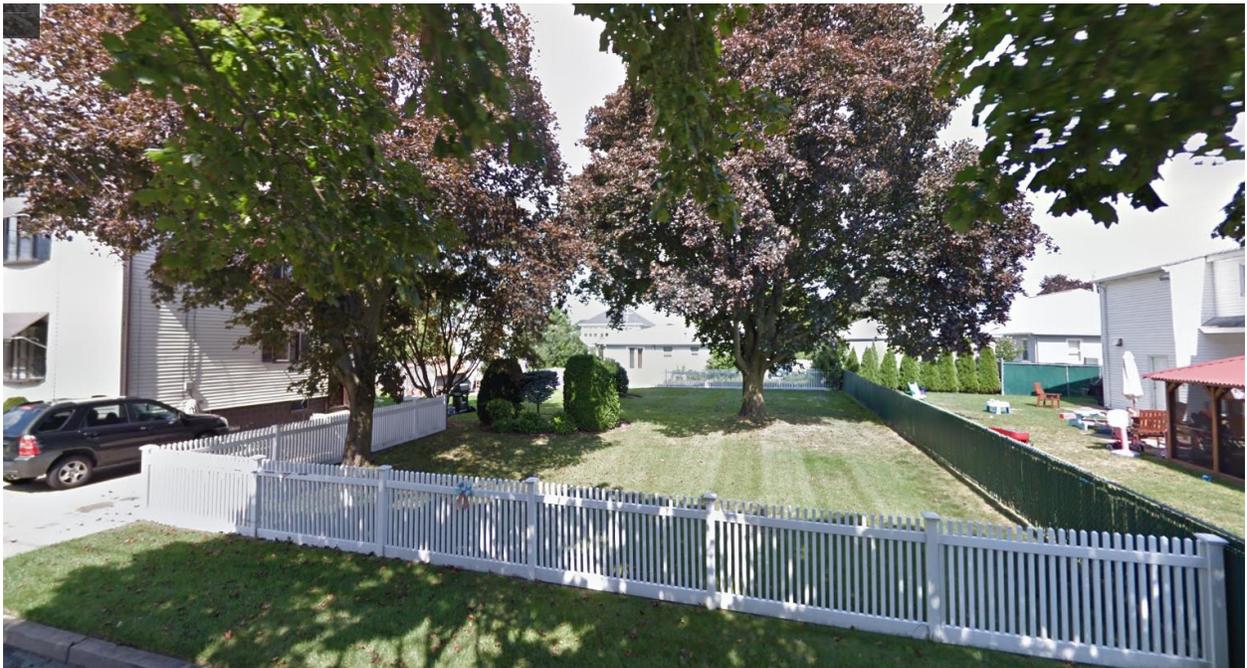
3-D AERIAL VIEW (facing northeast)



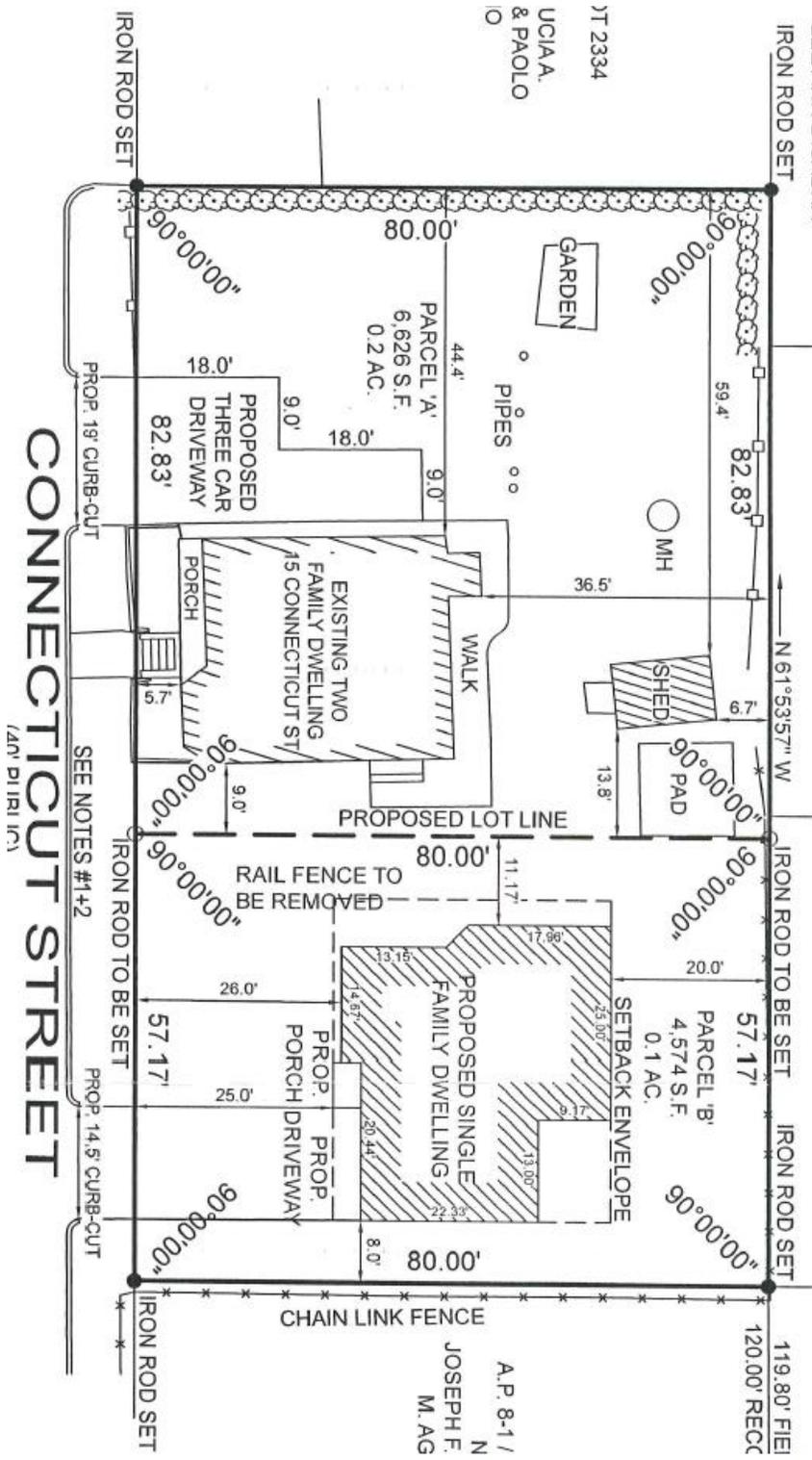
STREET VIEW – PROPOSED PARCEL A
(Connecticut St facing northeast)



STREET VIEW – PROPOSED PARCEL B
(Connecticut St facing north)



SITE PLAN



FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The subject property consists of 11,200 ft² and is currently home to a two-family home. The applicants seek to subdivide the lot into two nonconforming lots in order to develop a single-family home on the new lot.
2. Both proposed lots would comply with the off-street parking requirements.
3. Analyses of properties within 400' shows that the proposed two-family lot is **above** the average lot area of other two-family lots by 845 ft², and the proposed single-family lot is **below** the average single-family lot area by 871 ft². The end result of the two lots is generally conforming to the average lot sizes in the neighborhood by a small margin.
4. The proposed density is 11.67 units/acre, slightly above the maximum density established by the Comprehensive Plans Future Land Use Map designation of Single/Two Family Residential less than 10.89 units/acre. Therefore, the proposal is consistent in terms of use, but inconsistent in terms of density with the Future Land Use Map.
5. The Comprehensive Plan Housing Element supports infill housing in eastern Cranston. This plan encourages/promotes housing development which does not require the extension of roads and utilities, eats up less open space, and creates housing choices more in line with modest price points.
6. The Comprehensive Plan specifically supports allowing 5,000 ft² lots in B-1 zones, stating that it would "help meet the current demand for housing." (p. 69)

PLANNING ANALYSIS

Staff's analysis for applications which ask for zoning relief to create substandard lots comes primarily down to two issues: consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and consistency with the surrounding area.

The proposed density is 11.67 units/acre, slightly above the maximum density established by the Comprehensive Plans Future Land Use Map designation of Single/Two Family Residential less than 10.89 units/acre. Therefore, **the proposal is consistent in terms of use, but slightly inconsistent in terms of density with the Future Land Use Map.**

That being said, the Future Land Use Map is not the only measure for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Staff finds the proposal to be generally consistent with policy directions in the Comprehensive Plan, particularly in the Housing Element. The Housing Element supports infill housing in eastern Cranston. This policy encourages/promotes housing development which does not require the extension of roads and utilities, eats up less open space, and creates housing choices more in line with modest price points. More specifically, the Comp Plan Housing Element states:

Allowing 5,000 square foot lots within the A-6, B-1 and B-2 districts to become conforming would reduce a financial burden on the property owners when obtaining building permits in these districts. This could be an incentive to create more housing and improve existing housing. Although not required to be

affordable, the new and improved units would help meet the current demand for housing. (p. 69)

The proposed single-family lot is 4,574 ft², which is 426 ft² short of the 5,000 ft² threshold, so staff looks to the surrounding neighborhood to determine how appropriate it is to strictly interpret this number when applying the policy direction.

A zoning analysis was provided by the applicant which gives a breakdown of land uses and lot areas within 400' of the subject lot. The average lot areas for two-family in the neighborhood is 5,781 ft². The proposed two-family lot is 6,626 ft², which is greater than the average for two-family lots in the area. The average lot area for single-family lots is 5,445 ft². The proposed single-family lot is 4,574 ft², which is below the average for single-family lots in the area. **The duplex is above the average area by 845 ft², and the single-family is below the average area by 871 ft², so staff finds that the end result is generally conforming to the average lot sizes in the neighborhood.**

In sum, there are positive and negative findings. The proposed single family home is beneath the average single-family lot area, and the density is slightly above the maximum allocated by the Future Land Use Map. However, the proposed two-family lot is above the average lot area of the neighborhood, and the proposal is consistent with the housing policies. The conflicting findings leave staff with the challenge of determining which findings to prioritize. Ultimately, the proposed lots sizes are consistent with the average when looking at the project as a whole, and, in staff's opinion, the housing policies in the Comprehensive Plan provide more substantive guidance than the density calculation which applies to large areas with little nuance. Therefore, although there are negative findings, there is just enough for staff to support the subdivision and requests for relief.

Recommendation:

Due to the finding that the application is consistent with the Cranston Comprehensive Plan housing policies and finding that proposed areas are generally consistent with the surrounding area, staff recommends the Plan Commission forward a **positive recommendation** on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.