

City Planning Department



Memo

To: Cranston City Plan Commission
From: Amelia Lavalley – Planning Intern
Date: February 8, 2023
Re: Variance Application for 2050 Plainfield Pike

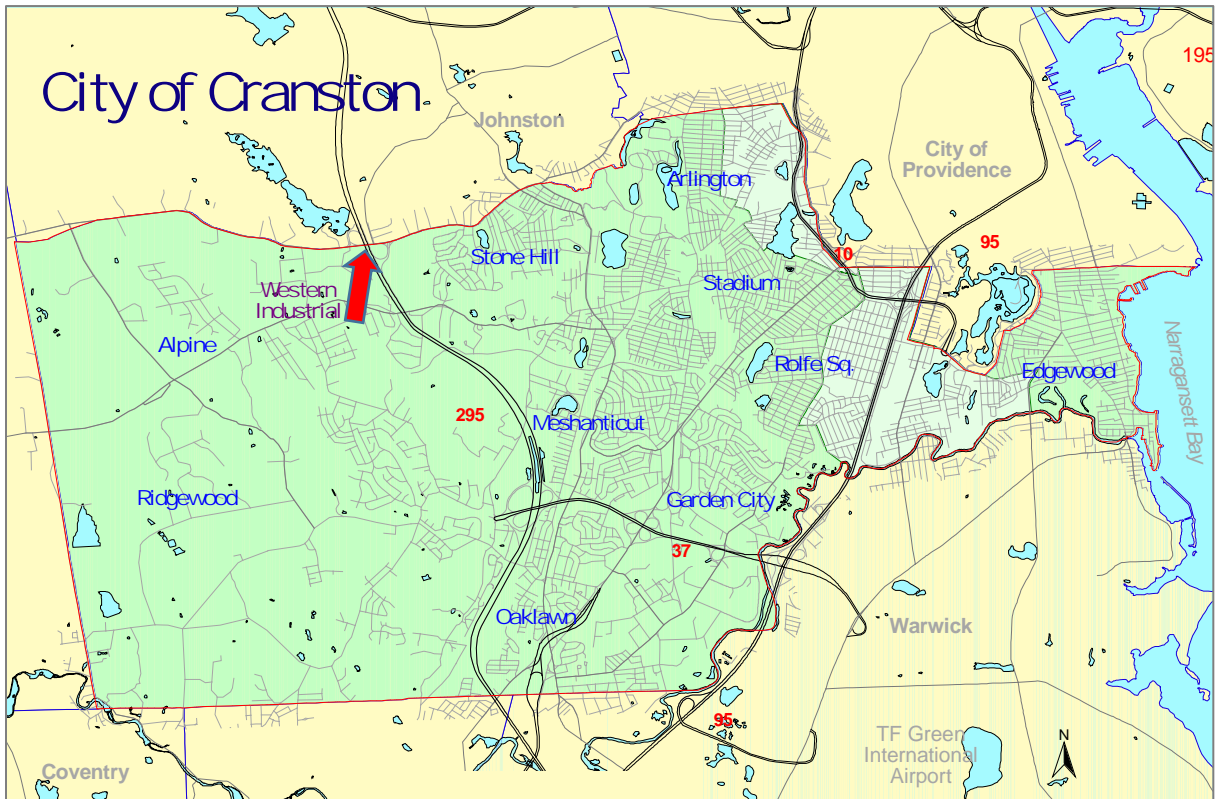
Owner / App: Colbea Enterprises LLC
Location: 2050 Plainfield Pike - AP 36/2, Lots 116 & 117
Zone: C-5 (Heavy business, industry)
FLU: M-2 (General industry)

DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE REQUESTS:

1. To exceed the required 30-foot driveway width by 15 feet (45 feet). [17.48.010-(D)(4) – Gasoline service stations]
2. To reduce the required 20-foot driveway to property line separation by 15 feet (5 feet). [17.48.010-(D)(6) – Gasoline service stations]
3. To allow reduced distance between freestanding sign and property line. [17.72.010(6)]
4. To exceed the 50-square ft. maximum area requirement for total area of a free-standing sign by 217.4 square feet (267.4 square ft.). [17.48.010(6)] – Gasoline service stations]
5. To exceed the maximum height of a freestanding sign from 15 feet to 26.25 feet (11.25 feet). [17.72.010(6)]
6. To exceed the maximum height of a monument sign from 4 feet to 7.33 feet (3.33 feet). [17.72.010(6)]
7. To exceed the maximum height of a wall sign from 30 feet to 85 feet (55 feet). [17.72.010(6)]
8. To exceed maximum total signage area from 420 sq. feet (20 percent of the total street facing façade wall area), to 515.6 sq. feet (215.6 sq. feet). [17.72.010(6)]

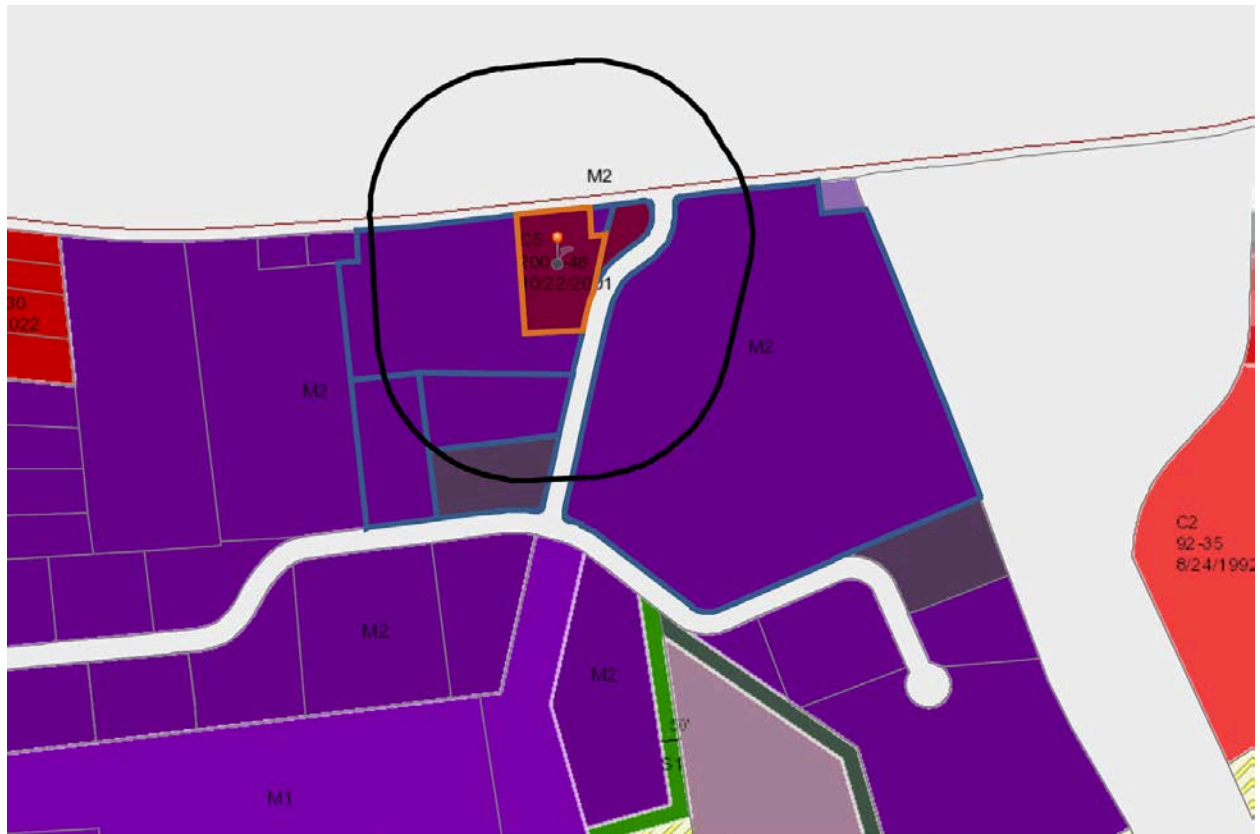
* Pursuant to Chapter 17.84.140(C)(6)(a)(b), all developments shall provide a year-round landscape buffer that is a minimum of eight (8) feet in height, consisting of fencing, vegetation, berms, rocks, boulders, mounds, or combinations thereof, and a minimum ten (10) feet wide landscaped strip shall be provided along property lines parallel to a street where parking or circulation areas abuts said street. It should be noted applicant has requested a variance from the landscaping requirements. However, the Development Plan Review Committee (DPRC) had previously granted relief from this requirement by waiver. DPRC has this authority per Section 17.84.200(B) – “The DPRC may modify or waive the design and landscape standards required by this chapter provided it finds in writing the modification or waiver is in the public interest, enhances site design and not inconsistent with the intent and purpose of this chapter.”

LOCATION MAP



ZONING MAP

(subject parcel marked in orange, 400 - foot radius marked in black)



NEIGHBORHOOD AERIAL

(subject parcel marked in orange, 400 - foot radius marked in black)



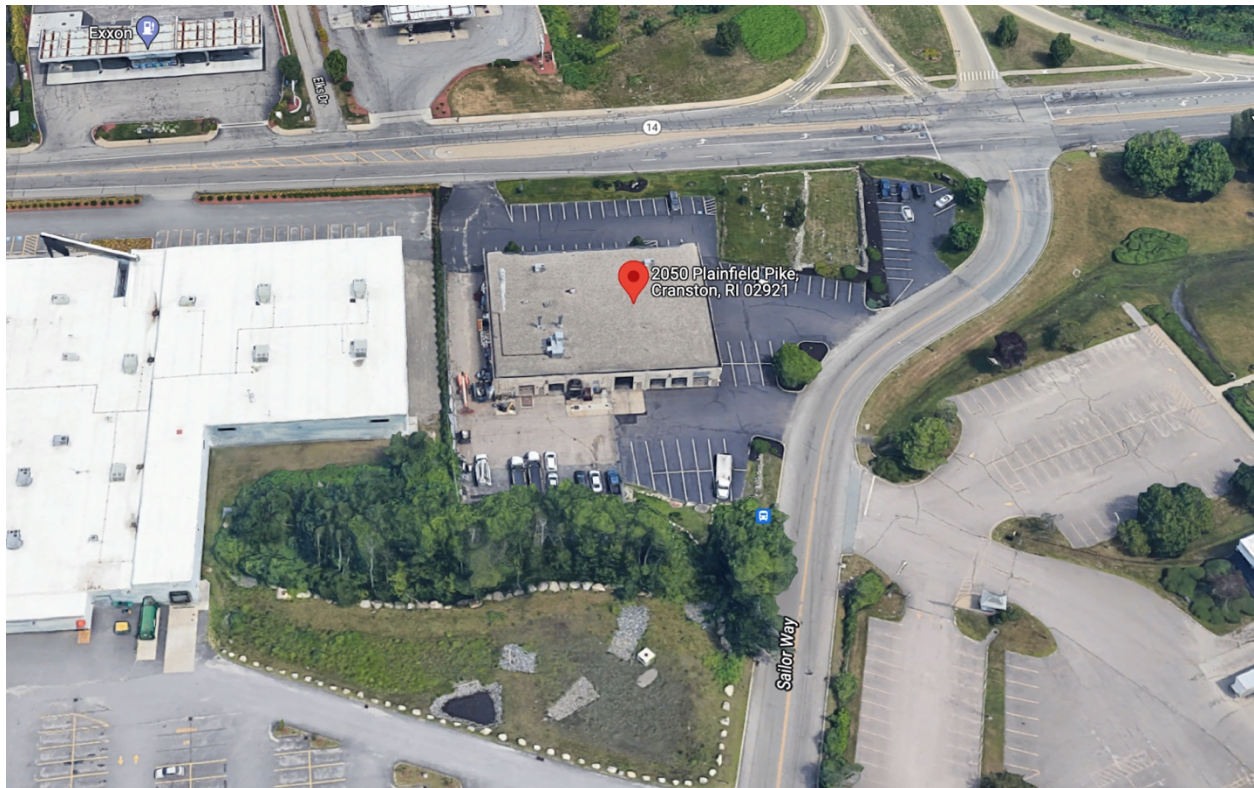
STREET VIEW



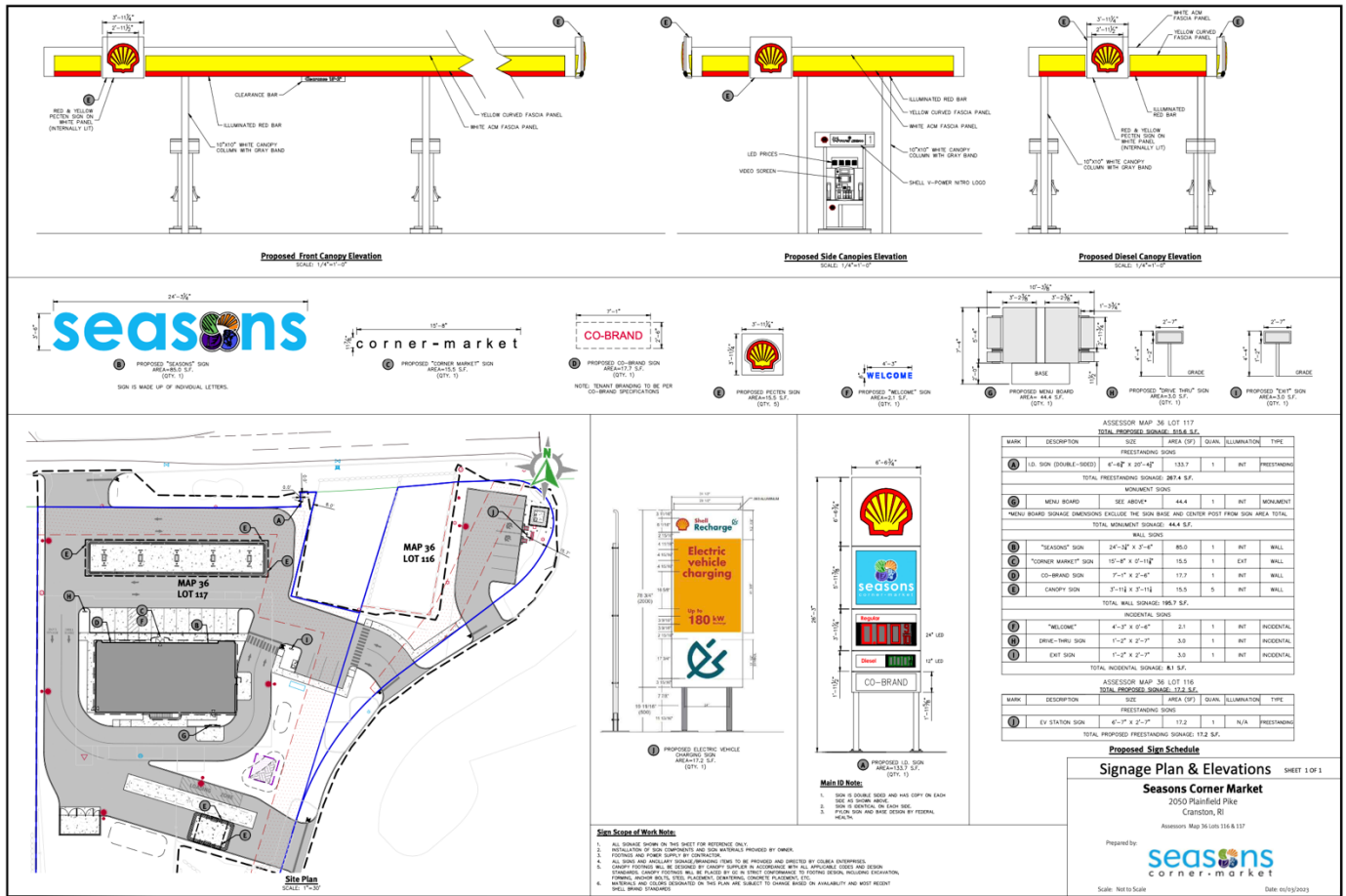
AERIAL CLOSE UP



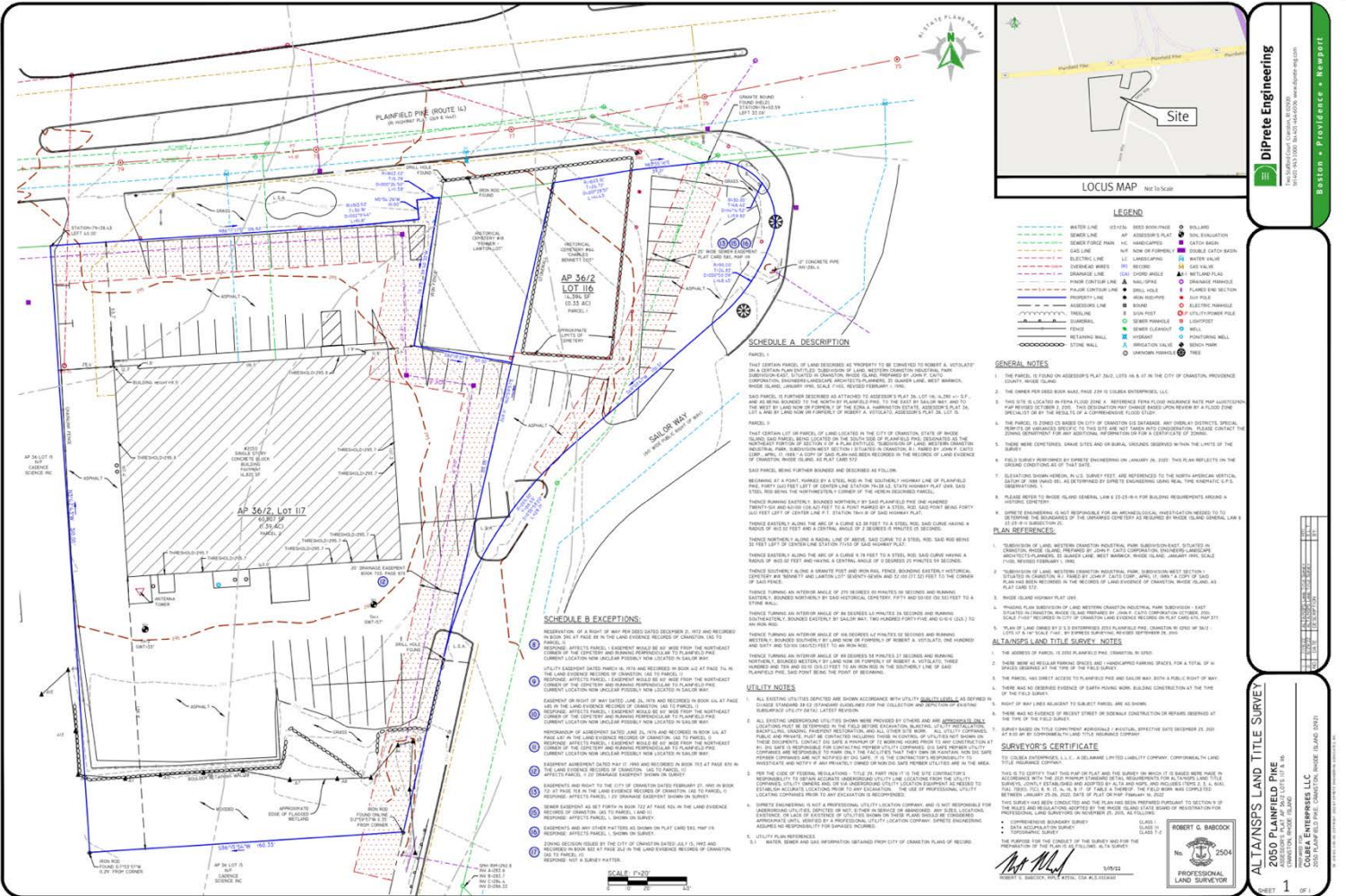
3-D AERIAL VIEW



RENDERINGS OF PROPOSED SIGNS



PROPOSED SITE PLAN



FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The applicant requires relief for total sign area; for individual sign height for three signs (monument, wall, freestanding); additional driveway width, and reduced distance between freestanding sign and property line, and driveway to property line.
2. The subject parcel (AP 36/2, Lots 116 & 117) is located in the C-5 zone (Heavy business, industry).
 1. The proposed uses for the Premises as a fuel station full service, convenience store and a drive-in restaurant are permitted **by right** in the C-5 Zoning District, in accordance with Chapter 17.20.030 of the Ordinances.
3. This use is complementary to heavy industrial uses within the vicinity, as the property is located in the main commercial corridor of Plainfield Pike, surrounded by other gasoline service stations, and auto-oriented business/services to the north and south.
4. The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designates this area for General Industry (M-2), although zoning controls the property for C-5, which allows for *both* commercial and industrial use.
5. With freestanding, monument, and wall signs commonly found for businesses on Plainfield Pike, the proposed relief from maximum sign height and total area would not be out of character or injurious to the area and are **not** inconsistent with the general highway-commercial character of Plainfield Pike.
 - a. Given the heavy traffic area on Plainfield Pike, including an additional increase in tractor trailer use, necessitates the need for larger, taller signage.
6. Based upon the fact that this gas station proposal is designed specifically for the filling of tractor trailers, a wider opening is needed to accommodate necessary turning movements.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

The applicant is requesting relief to exceed maximum allowable driveway width, maximum height and total area of a freestanding, wall, and monument sign, as well as reduced driveway to property line separation, and reduced distance between freestanding sign and property line.

Staff is of the view that denial of the dimensional variance requests would be antithetical to the City's economic development goals and business-friendly policies, especially within an area designated for commercial business. Staff finds the request to be reasonable based on the existing conditions, the character of Plainfield Pike and the nature of the request. The denial of the request does not appear to serve any other policy or goal of the Comprehensive Plan, so staff finds that the request is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff finds that the requests for dimensional relief for freestanding, monument, and wall signs, as well as increased driveway width, and reduced property line separation at 2050 Plainfield Pike are necessary to accommodate the highway-commercial, heavily trafficked area of a main commercial corridor, and that the requests would not be injurious or out of character with the surrounding area. Analysis of the Comprehensive Plan is inconclusive regarding guidance on signage in western Cranston. Staff recommends that the Plan Commission forward a **positive recommendation** on this application to the Zoning Board of Review.