

CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT



Memorandum

To: City Plan Commission
From: Jamie Ray | Planner Technician
Date: September 1, 2026
RE: 357 Dyer Avenue – Assessor's Plat 8, Lot 2798
Application for Sign Variance

Owner: Pate Lakay
Applicant: Steven Gilbert
Location: 357 Dyer Avenue
Neighborhood: Laurel Hill
Zoning: C-4 – (Highway Business)
FLUM Designation: Highway Commercial/Services

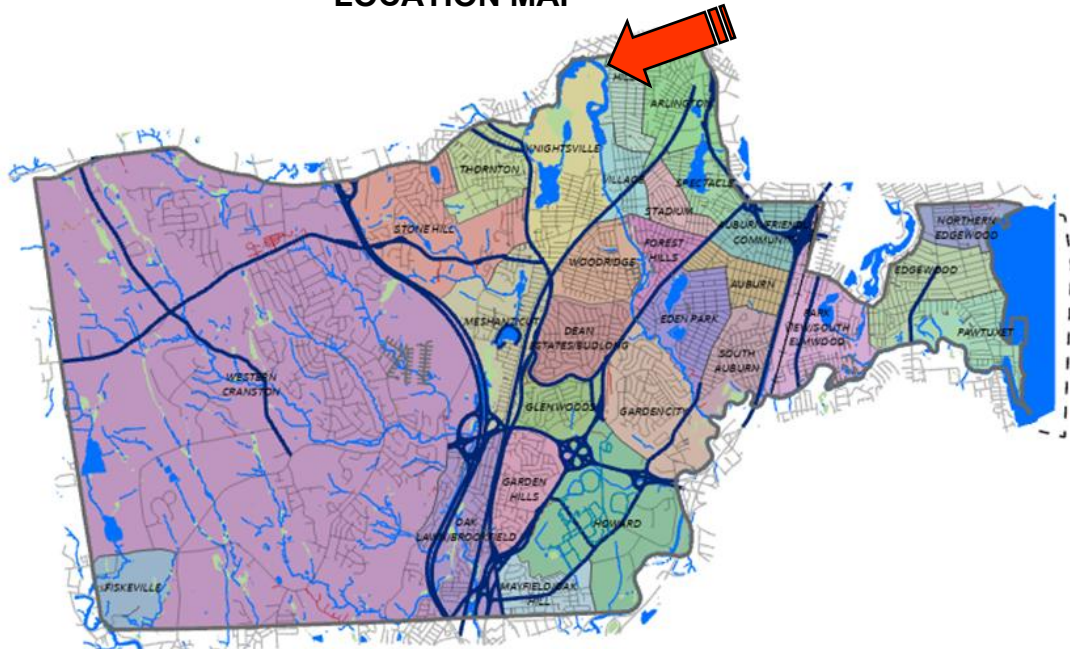
Subject Property:

The subject property is located at 357 Dyer Avenue, identified as Plat 8, Lot 2798 and has a land area of 0.0812 ± acres, (3,535 sf).

Request:

The applicant has applied to the Board for permission to operate a restaurant in an existing legal, non-conforming building with no off-street parking and to install new wall signage exceeding the allowable size. Applicant seeks relief per Section 17.92.010-Variances; Sections 17.72.010 – Signs; Section 17.64.010 – Off-Street Parking.

LOCATION MAP



AERIAL VIEW



STREET VIEW

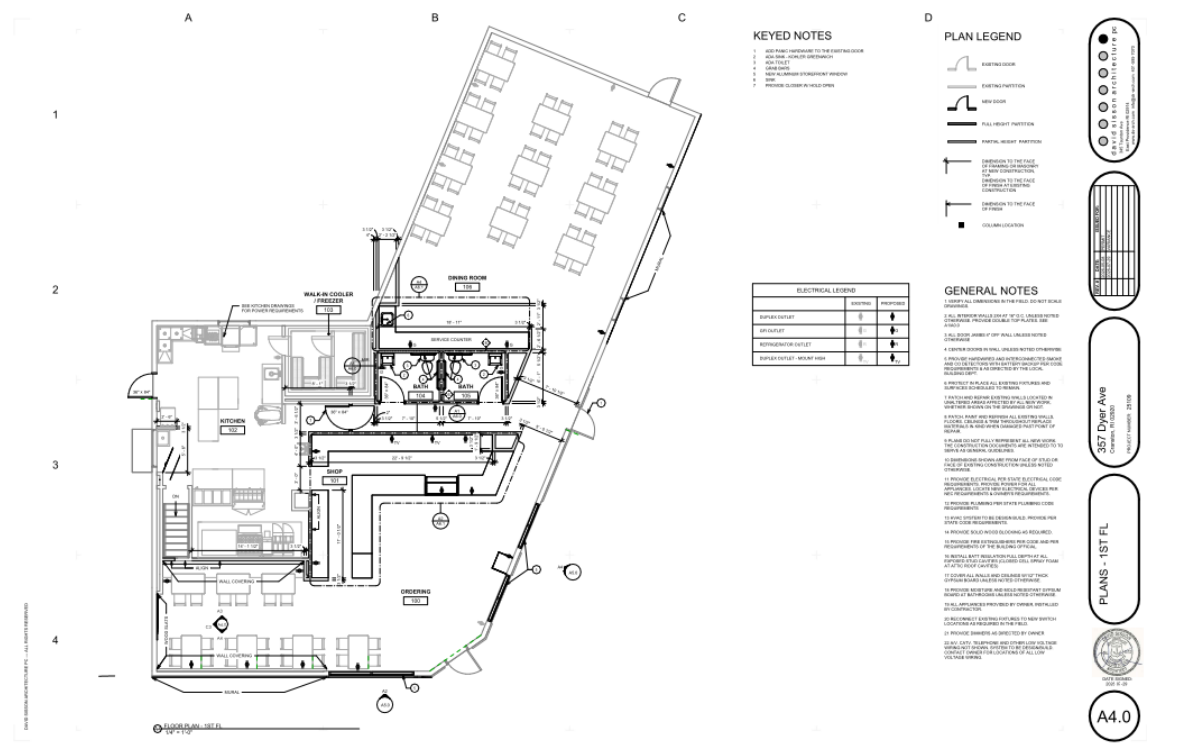


(GOOGLE IMAGERY JUNE 2025)

SIGN PLAN



FLOOR PLAN



Findings of Fact:

The Applicant has requested specific relief in their application, namely:

- 17.72.010 – Signs
- 17.64.010 – Off-Street Parking

Relief Sought:

C-4 Zone	Required	Proposed	Relief Sought
Off-Street Parking	21 Spaces	0 Spaces	21 Spaces
Wall Sign Size	30 sf	87.4 sf	57.4 sf

Staff Analysis:

Staff has reviewed this Application in consideration of the compatibility with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood, and the request does not impose undue nuisances and is not out of character beyond any uses on this site or within the surrounding area. The subject property and the surrounding area are primarily residential in nature and the request does not propose or encourage incompatible uses that would be disruptive to the surrounding area.

- The subject property is extremely constrained by the fact that the entire lot is covered by the footprint of the existing building and there are no associated parking lots for this lot. This makes off-street parking requirements impossible to comply with. However, there are many reasons to believe that granting a parking variance would allow consistency with the surrounding area and comprehensive plan.
 - This property is in an area that is served by customers from both Providence and Cranston. There is significant residential density that surrounds it, which potentially incentivizes foot traffic to this location. Additionally, multiple transit lines serve this area.
 - The building is located in a small commercial area surrounded by a dense, walkable neighborhood whose residents are the primary customers it serves. The area was constructed pre-automobile and consequently, most businesses have minimal or no off-street parking. The lack of parking incentivizes customers to access the area on foot or by the transit lines that serve the area. There is also ample on-street parking on Dyer Avenue and Farmington Avenue for loading and customer parking. If on-street parking or loading become a concern, on-street parking management strategies can be employed by the Department of Public Works to manage parking and loading in the area.
- The Cranston signage requirements can be rigid and hard to apply to businesses with existing non-conforming structures. The proposed sign is labeled as a mural, despite having sign text. Murals are not expressly permitted in Cranston, despite their visual appeal.
 - One of the stated purposes of Cranston's sign regulations is to "enhance the aesthetic environment and the city's ability to attract sources of economic development and growth"
 - The proposed mural would improve the aesthetics of this area. The existing building is prominently featured in an intersection that serves as an entrance to Cranston. Additionally, the building has remained undecorated and uninhabited for many years, indicating that a visual overhaul would be beneficial to help achieve commercial success in this space.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and FLUM

- The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designates the subject property as "*Highway Commercial/Services*"
 - Per the Comprehensive Plan, the C-4 zoning district is an appropriate zoning classification for restaurant uses.
 - Staff finds that the Application is consistent with the Future Land Use Map designation.
- Staff finds that the following goals, policies, and action items outlined in the Comprehensive Plan pertaining to commercial development support the approval of this Application:
 - Goal ED-2: Attract capital into the Cranston area and expand the City's economic base.

- Policy ED-23: Revitalize underused area of the City for uses that are in keeping with the needs and values of the community.
- Action ED-18: Target improvement of neighborhood commercial centers to service their market area and to reduce congestion for cross-town traffic.

Summary

Staff conclude that the proposal is compatible with the general character of the neighborhood, does not provide disruption or nuisance, and supports the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Recommendation:

ZBR-26-38 (357 Dyer Avenue):

In accordance with RIGL § 45-24-41(b) and Section 17.92.010(A) of the Zoning Ordinance, Staff finds this Application consistent with the goals and purposes of the Comprehensive Plan and is compatible with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood. Staff therefore recommend that the City Plan Commission adopt the Findings of Fact documented above and forward a **POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION** on the Application to the Zoning Board of Review.

Respectfully Submitted,

James S. Ray

Jamie Ray
Administrative Officer | Planner Technician