

City Planning Department



Memo

To: Cranston City Plan Commission
From: Doug McLean, AICP - Principal Planner
Date: September 3, 2021
Re: **Ordinance 7-21-10** - Amendment of Chapter 17, entitled "Zoning" (Change of Zone from C-3 to C-2 with condition for a maximum of 8 residential units – 1369 Park Avenue and 0 Park Avenue).

I. Proposal

The owner/applicant, Sprague Covington, LLC, is requesting a zone change for two (2) properties located at 1369 Park Avenue and 0 Park Avenue, further identified as AP 11, Lots 273 & 4062. The request is to change the properties' zoning designation from C-3 to "C-2 with conditions". The specific condition requested by the applicant is that the combined properties (totaling 23,594 sq.ft) shall be allowed to have up to a total of 8 dwelling units. Based on the underlying zoning allowances of the C-2 zone, a multi-family development would be an allowed use but the maximum number of dwelling units that the property could yield based on its square footage is 5 units. The proposed zone change to "C-2 with conditions" would create a "contract zone" for this specific site and would allow for 3 additional dwelling units to be built in conformance with the Major Land Development application requirements.

Further details regarding the proposed project with regard to the site plan, other graphics/maps, and the required findings for a Major Land Development are addressed in a separate memo on the Master Plan application (see planning department webpage).

The Plan Commission is charged with forwarding a recommendation on the proposed zone change to the City Council in coordination with making a decision on the Master Plan stage of the Major Land Development application.

II. Planning Analysis

The application to rezone the property should be considered in close coordination with the proposed Master Plan application. The immediate rezone application is seeking a change from C-3 to C-2, while also requesting an increase in density at this specific site (up to 8 total dwelling units) beyond what the underlying zoning would allow. Such an increase in density must be considered in tandem with the specific development outcomes being proposed by the Master Plan and the context of surrounding neighborhood. Staff highly recommends that any interested party in this proposal review the totality of both this Ordinance memo and the Sprague Covington Plat Master Plan memo in order to consider the full range of information available on the project.

The site is currently host to a patch of remnant asphalt from a previous use (restaurant) and 2

large signs. One of the large signs is a blank free-standing sign that previously labeled the restaurant use. The other large sign is a double tall billboard that does not conform to current zoning standards for signage. There are no buildings currently on the property. The proposal will remove the existing signage, which would be considered an aesthetic improvement to the subject site from staff's perspective. Additionally, staff finds the design of the proposed dwelling units will fit the character of the surrounding neighborhood, which contains other multi-family apartment complexes and a range of commercial and industrial uses. The final development outcome of the proposal will represent a significant aesthetic improvement and functionality of the site compared to current conditions.

With regard to the proposed 8 dwelling units, the applicant will be formatting these units as condos for individual ownership as opposed to a rental apartment complex. Based on the floor plans received (see page 9 of Master Plan memo) it is clear that each unit will be constructed as identical 1-bedroom housing units with a small common space area for a living room/kitchenette. The project does include any 2-bedrooms or larger units. The property will offer ample parking opportunities based on indoor garages, driveways, and common parking spaces as shown in the site plan. The site will be host to a total of 24 parking spaces which account for 3 parking spaces for each unit (a conservative increase over the 2 parking spaces required for each unit by zoning). The project design and resulting square footage of the units lends itself well to providing accessible housing opportunities on the lower end of the price spectrum. It is not expected that the resulting housing units will be deed-restricted affordable housing units but the project will offer "practical" affordability housing choices for individuals interested in living in this neighborhood of Cranston.

Staff reviewed the City's Comprehensive Plan to determine if the zone change request is consistent with the Plan for the use and density being proposed. The property has a Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation of Neighborhood Commercial/Services. Such a FLUM designation allows for both the zoning designations of C-3 and C-2 so in this instance a Comprehensive Plan amendments is not necessary to allow for the rezone. Additionally, the use of multi-family residential (housing with at least 3-units in 1 building) is identified as an allowed use in the Neighborhood Commercial/Services designation. With regard to the conditional density increase, the Comprehensive Plan does not restrict housing density for properties within the Neighborhood Commercial/Services designation. Furthermore, the proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element in that development of infill lots is encouraged in Eastern Cranston. As a final point, multi-family residential is allowed by-right in a C-2 zone and no dimensional variances for lot size, frontage, building setbacks or otherwise are needed in association with this project. Based on the above, staff finds that the rezone proposal is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

III. Findings

Comprehensive Plan Consistency

The proposal is consistent with multiple aspects of the Comprehensive Plan. The property has a Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation of Neighborhood Commercial/Services that allows for a straight rezone to C-2. With regard to the proposed density increase to 8 dwellings on the subject property, staff finds that the Neighborhood Commercial/Services designation does not restrict housing density. The proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element in that development of infill lots is encouraged in Eastern Cranston.

Findings Under §17.04.010 City Code

Sec. 17.120.030 requires that the City Plan Commission as part of its recommendation to the City Council “Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning as presented in Section 17.04.010 of this title.” Section 17.04.010 set forth the General Purpose for Title 17 (Zoning Ordinance) of the City Code. To the extent that the proposed rezone and the subsequent multi-family residential development on this site will be required to comply with all aspects of the Zoning Ordinance, including Major Subdivision review by the Plan Commission, and will be required to comply with City of Cranston Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, staff finds that the proposed rezone will adequately address the appropriate purposes detailed in §17.04.010.

IV. Recommendation

Based on the findings that the rezone is consistent with Comprehensive Plan and Section 17.04.010 of the Zoning Ordinance, in addition to the findings that the rezone is consistent with the surrounding neighborhood, staff recommends that the Plan Commission forward a **positive recommendation** on Ordinance #07-21-10 to the City Council.