

Hearing Date: December 1, 2025

Case Number: SE-25-15

Applicant: Cranston, LLC

Property Owner: St. Mary's Church

Property Address: 2500, 2502, 2504, and 2516
McDowell Street, and 1405 Arsenal Avenue

Tax Parcel No(s): 044-1-059-00-0, 044-1-058-00-0,
044-1-057-00-0, 044-1-056-00-0, & 044-1-060-00-0

Current Zoning: R-1 (One-Family Residential) and
R-3B (Multiple-Family Residential)

Fort Gordon Notification Required: N/A

Commission District 2: Stacy Pulliam

Super District 9: Francine Scott



REQUEST	PROPOSED USE/ACTIVITY	APPLICABLE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE SECTION(S)
Special Exception	Church Expansion	Section 26-1(a)

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

This special exception applies to five parcels totaling roughly 1.73 acres within the R-1 (One-Family Residential) and R-3B (One-Family Residential) zoning districts. The properties front Monte Sano Avenue, McDowell Street, and Arsenal Avenue. The parcels include additional parking areas, vacant land, and four separate structures. Tax records from the Augusta-Richmond County Tax Office indicate that the main St. Mary's Church building was built in 1919, though it is not being included with this request. The request seeks approval to expand the existing church site and is being reviewed concurrently with a rezoning application to change all parcels owned by the church to R-1 (One-Family Residential).

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENCY:

According to the 2023 Comprehensive Plan, the property is located in the Old Augusta Character Area. The 2023 Comprehensive Plan's vision for the Old Augusta Character Area is to maintain and enhance its historic character and unique mix of land uses while maintaining stability in established neighborhoods. Underutilized parcels should be redeveloped with respect for existing development patterns and the historic architecture in the area. Redevelopment should include the removal of deteriorated and dilapidated structures, construction or rehabilitation of single-family housing, new medium and high-density housing, additional commercial and office development, new civic and institutional facilities. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings will be a key component. New development should respect the scale,

massing, architecture, of the existing historic structures and acknowledge stable neighborhoods with long term property ownership.

FINDINGS:

1. An application was filed on November 4, 2025, to rezone the properties from R-1 (One-Family Residential) and R-3B (Multiple-Family Residential) to R-1 (One-Family Residential) and it will be considered by the Commission in conjunction with this request.
2. Churches and other religious institutions are not permitted by-right in the R-1 (One-Family Residential) zone but may be granted with the approval of a special exception.
3. On November 11, 1991, the Augusta Commission granted a Special Exception to allow the expansion of the main church building located at 1420 Monte Sano Avenue.
4. Section 26-1(a) of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, churches and other religious institutions may be permitted by Special Exception in the R-1 and R-3B zones if they generally conform to the following criteria:
 - A tract upon which a church is to be established shall have at least one hundred (100) feet of frontage on a collector street or an arterial street and be at least one-half acre in area. ***The church fronts a local road and has successfully operated for several decades.***
 - Structures shall be set back at least twenty-five (25) feet from any property line separating the subject property from residentially zoned or developed properties. ***The main structure was built along the property line on Monte Sano Avenue and is set approximately 14 feet from Monte Sano Avenue and 15 feet from McDowell Street. The building complies with the required 25-foot rear setback.***
 - Off-street parking shall conform to Section 4 of this Ordinance. ***According to the Zoning Ordinance, parking for a church is calculated at one space per three seats in the sanctuary at full capacity. The site plan includes approximately 257 off-street parking spaces, along with 22 on-street spaces adjacent to the property.***
 - A plan illustrating compliance with the above requirements shall be submitted to the Planning Commission before the proposal is placed on the agenda. The Planning Commission shall determine that all the foregoing requirements have been satisfied, and further, that the benefits of the proposed church are greater than any possible depreciating effects and damages to the neighboring properties. ***The proposed site modifications require approval from the Historic Preservation Commission. Additionally, the plan must meet the minimum setback and parking standards outlined in the Zoning Ordinance.***
5. The properties have nearby access to public potable water and sanitary sewer systems.
6. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Function Classification Map, 2017, classifies Monte Sano Avenue, McDowell Street and Arsenal Avenue as local roads.

7. The proposed development must satisfy the minimum off-street parking requirement for a church, providing one parking space for every three seats based on the maximum capacity of the main sanctuary.
8. The nearest bus stop is situated immediately adjacent to the subject property.
9. According to the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) the properties are not located within a Special Flood Hazard Area.
10. According to the Augusta-Richmond County GIS Map Layer there are no wetlands located on the properties.
11. The surrounding zoning districts are R-1 (One-Family Residential) and R-3B (Multiple-Family Residential) to the north; R-3B (Multiple-Family Residential) to the east; R-1 (One-Family Residential) and B-1 (Neighborhood Business) to the south; and B-1 (Neighborhood Business) to the west.
12. The property is situated in the Summerville Historic District; any new construction or exterior improvements are subject to historic preservation review and approval.
13. The proposed change in zoning to R-1 would be consistent with the 2023 Comprehensive Plan.
14. At the time of the completion of this report, staff have not received any inquiries regarding this petition as advertised.

ENGINEERING/UTILITIES COMMENTS:

Traffic Engineering Comments:

- “Project is adjacent to roadway planned for improvements by AED. Coordinate with AED project consultant.”

Engineering Comments:

- “Detention and water quality required. Make drop-off area 3-lane widths wide.”

Utilities Comments:

- No comments received

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission recommends Approval of the special exception request with the following conditions:

1. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) approval and subsequent issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) will be required prior to commencement of any exterior changes to the parcels.
2. The development must comply with all aspects of the Augusta Tree Ordinance.
3. Approval of this Special Exception request does not constitute approval of the conceptual site plan submitted with the Special Exception application. The proposed development shall obtain site plan approval in compliance with Site Plan Regulations of Augusta, Georgia prior to construction commencing on the property.
4. The development of the property shall comply with all development standards and regulations set forth by the City of Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia, as amended, at the time of development.

NOTE: *This staff report includes the information available approximately two weeks prior to the Planning Commission hearing. It represents an evaluation of the facts presented by the applicant, research done by the staff, and consideration of the relevant factors in the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of Augusta, Georgia. New facts may emerge, and staff reserves the right to make a verbal recommendation at the hearing based on all the information available at that time.*

Augusta Planning and Development Department
535 Telfair Street
Augusta, Georgia 30901

October 27, 2025

Dear Augusta Planning and Development Department,

On behalf of St. Mary on the Hill Catholic Church, we hereby submit this request for a Special Exception for Parcel #044-1-056-00-0, located at 2516 McDowell Street, to receive Special Exception approval within the R-1 (Single-Family Residential) zoning district. This parcel is currently zoned R-1 and is identified as "Tract B" on the enclosed Boundary, Topographic, and Utility Survey by Cranston, LLC dated March and April 2024, with an area of 0.89 acres.

In addition, we respectfully request the rezoning of the following parcels from R-3B to R-1 (Single-Family Residential) with Special Exception approval for each parcel: Parcels #044-1-057-00-0, #044-1-058-00-0, #044-1-059-00-0, and #044-1-060-00-0, located at 2504 McDowell Street, 2502 McDowell Street, 2500 McDowell Street, and 1405 Arsenal Avenue, respectively. These parcels are currently zoned R-3B.

The properties proposed for Special Exception and rezoning approval are identified on the enclosed Boundary, Topographic, and Utility Survey as "Tract C," "Tract D," "Tract E," and "Tract F," with areas of 0.28 acres, 0.18 acres, 0.24 acres, and 0.14 acres, respectively. "Tract A," comprising 3.04 acres and currently zoned R-1 with a Special Exception, is part of the church campus, and no rezoning or special exception is requested for this parcel.


The five aforementioned parcels of which a special exception is requested, together with the existing parcel that has a special exception in place, will be combined and redeveloped. The redevelopment includes demolition of five existing structures, construction of a Parish Life Building and a Social Hall Building, and reconfiguration of on-site parking, with detailed plans to be submitted to the city for review and approval. The Parish Life Building will provide administrative offices, educational and ministry spaces, meeting rooms, a senior activity center, and areas for children's programs, including a playground. The Social Hall Building will feature a banquet hall, catering kitchen, restrooms, storage, and a basement for maintenance and Boy Scout activities. Together, these improvements will enhance parish facilities and support ministry, administration, and community life.

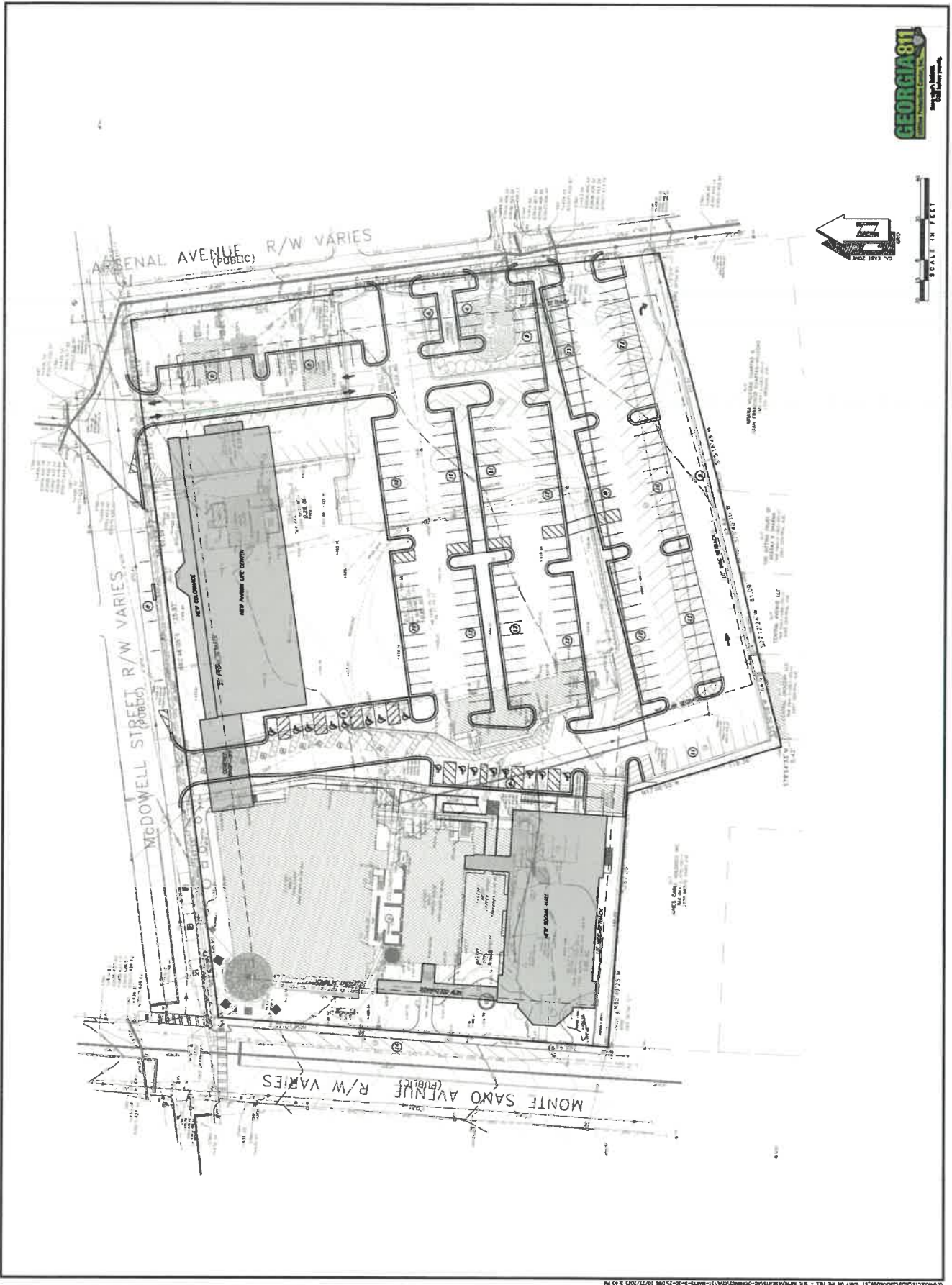
Thank you for your consideration and if you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at pnordmann@cranstonengineering.com or 706-722-1588.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. Patrick Nordmann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Pat Nordmann
Cranston, LLC

<div> <div>CRANSTON</div>  </div>	PRELIMINARY NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION	REVISION NO. 1 DATE 10/13/2023 DESCRIPTION	CONCEPT PLAN ST. MARY ON THE HILL CHURCH SITE IMPROVEMENTS
		DRAWN BY CHECKED BY DATE SCALE JOB NO. DRAWING NO.	CP-01 2023-0008 1" = 30' OCTOBER 13, 2023



Planning Commission
SE-25-15
December 1, 2025

Multiple Addresses on
McDowell Street, and
1405 Arsenal Avenue

Aerial

Subject Property



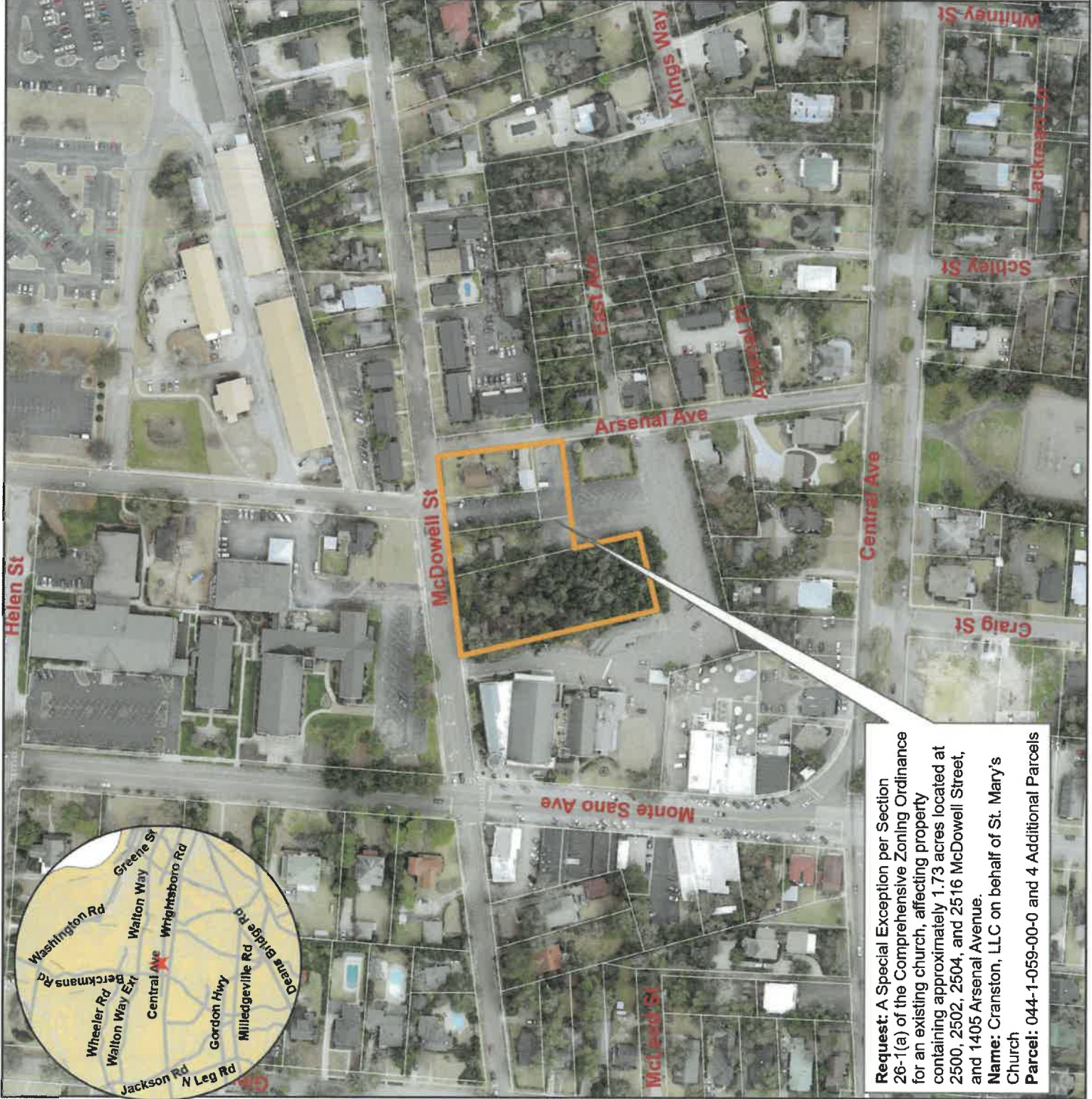
Produced By: City of Augusta
Planning & Development Department
535 Telfair Street Suite 300
Augusta, GA 30901
11/19/2025 PE22633

Augusta, GA Disclaimer

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Request: A Special Exception per Section 26-1(a) of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance for an existing church, affecting property containing approximately 1.73 acres located at 2500, 2502, 2504, and 2516 McDowell Street, and 1405 Arsenal Avenue.
Name: Cranston, LLC on behalf of St. Mary's Church
Parcel: 044-1-059-00-0 and 4 Additional Parcels

Planning Commission
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1405 Arsenal Avenue

Current Zoning

-  Subject Property
- Zoning Classification**
-  B-1: Neighborhood Business
 -  B-2: General Business
 -  P-1: Professional Residential
 -  R-1: One Family Residential
 -  R-1B: One Family Residential
 -  R-1C: One Family Residential
 -  R-2: Two Family Residential
 -  R-3A: Multiple-Family Residential
 -  R-3B: Multiple-Family Residential
 -  R-3C: Multiple-Family Residential



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