



**Revised March 18, 2024**

**Use Variance and Proposal Summary**

554A and 559 Lexington Avenue  
Block 457, Lots 8 and 9

The Applicant is seeking use variance relief for the property located at 554A and 559 Lexington Avenue, otherwise known as Block 457, lots 8 and 9 in the Township of Cranford. The property is sited in the southern portion of the Township, and Block 8 has frontage on Lexington Avenue at its terminus with the railroad right-of-way that transects Walnut Avenue. Block 9 is presently landlocked with no access to a right-of-way. The site is developed with a single-story building and multi-bay garage, is largely covered by impervious pavement, and utilized for non-residential purposes – including storage of materials and vehicles for contractor businesses.

The subject property is located in the R-1 “One Family Detached Residence District”, where single-family residences are a permitted use. Surrounding the property is the C-3 zone to the south across the railroad tracks, the R-3 zone to the north across the Lexington Avenue right-of-way, and a mixture of R-1 and R-3 zoning to the north and west.

The Applicant seeks to construct twenty-three (23) age-restricted, for-sale townhouse units – including three (3) 1-bedroom, eight (8) 2-bedroom and twelve (12) 3-bedroom units. Attached residences are not permitted in the R-1 zone as set forth in Section 255-36.A, and thus D(1) Use Variance relief is requested.

The application is proposed as “bifurcated” – meaning that it is only an application for the “D” Use Variance, and there will be a separate application for a subsequent engineered site plan if the use variance is granted. Despite the bifurcation, the Applicant requests relief from variance conditions of the bulk standards for the following: 1) minimum rear yard setback where 171.4 feet is required and 42 feet is proposed; 2) maximum impervious lot coverage, where 35% is permitted, or 27,284 square feet, and 51.0%, or 39,778 square feet is proposed; 3) maximum building coverage, where 25% or 19,489 square feet, is permitted and 25.4%, or 19,802.5 square feet, is proposed; 4) maximum building height, where 2.5 stories and 32 feet is permitted and 3 stories and 34.7 feet is proposed; and 5) minimum distance to a railroad or GSP is required to be 100 feet, whereas 25.6 feet is proposed. Testimony in support of the request for variance relief will be provided at the time of the hearing.

The Township Zoning Ordinance principally permits townhouses (as “attached 1-family homes”) in the R-6 zone, and conditionally permits them in R-5 and R-7 zones. Presently, there are eleven (11) total parcels zoned R-6 in the Township – of these, nine (9) are located near the Downtown along North Avenue or Springfield Avenue, and are largely developed here with the exception of two (2) properties which are owned by Union County Parks and Recreation and the Township (Block 262, Lot 1 and Lot 30.1); and the other two (2) parcels are located between Lambert Street and the Garden State Parkway (adjacent to Adams Park) and are undeveloped and also owned by the Township (Block 326, Lot 1 and Block 327, Lot 1). Townhouse development standards are prescribed further under Section 255-37.C.

While there are existing townhouse units within the Township, there are no age-restricted townhouse units within the Township limits. A market analysis of the Township and surrounding area within Union County provides that there is a gap in housing diversity within this region for age-restricted, for-sale townhouse units. The unit type as well as the design of the units, has been carefully thought out to help fill the gap in age-restricted, for-sale units within the Township. For example, the units include elevators that will be maintained by the homeowner's association. This housing type will provide an opportunity for Cranford residents to downsize while still of working-age, and by the design of these units, to "age in place" in the community that they have lived in and been a part of rather than relocate elsewhere. Additionally, by law, age-restricted units do not permit school-aged children, which reduces the impact on schools and municipal services. Finally, the project will provide an affordable housing set-aside of 3 units.