



TOWN OF COVENTRY, RI
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

STAFF REPORT

Project Name:	Centre of New England
Plan Type:	Major Land Development
Plan Review Phase:	Pre-Application
Owners:	Matthew J. McGowan, in Receiver for Commerce Park Realty, LLC; Commerce Park Properties, LLC; Commerce Park Commons, LLC; Commerce Park Associates 4, LLC; and Catapult Realty, LLC
Applicant:	Starr Capital LLC
Address:	Centre of New England Boulevard
Plat / Lot / Zone:	AP 13 Lot 14 and AP 14 Lot 65 Zone BP Lot Size 58.5 acres
Existing Use:	Vacant
Proposed Use:	Townhouse-style dwellings units
Description:	The applicant proposes to develop up to 500 townhouse-style dwelling units with associated parking, landscaping, and utilities on the subject parcel.

Background

This item will be reviewed as a Pre-Application for a proposed Major Land Development of a 58.5-acre subject parcel comprised of two lots: AP 13, Lot 14 (28 acres) and AP 14, Lot 65 (30.5 acres).

Although the applicant is the contract purchaser for seven parcels within Centre of New England and envisions a broader redevelopment to include residential, commercial, and open-space components, this report only concerns the two lots referenced above.

Staff anticipates the applicant will not only submit additional pre-application materials as it refines its proposals for the other development parcels, but also a series of detailed plans and studies to provide more information on the proposal discussed in this report.

Existing Conditions

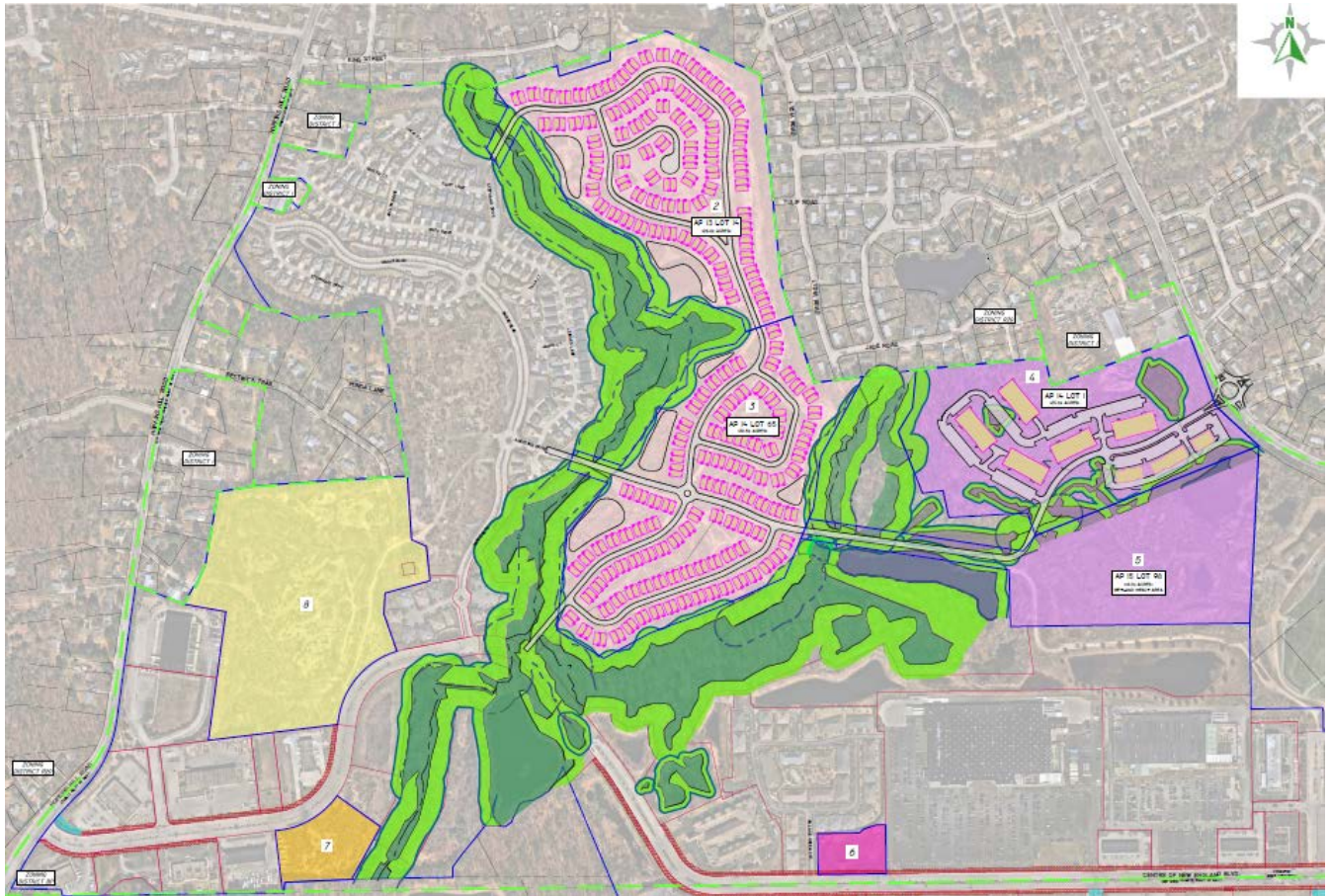


The subject parcel currently lacks frontage, but lies near the center of a triangular area bounded by Arnold Road, Hopkins Hill Road, and Centre of New England Boulevard.

The parcel is zoned BP (Business Park) and consists of undeveloped land. The abutting properties on the northern and eastern sides of Lot 14 are zoned R-20 (Residential), but otherwise the parcel is surrounded by BP-zoned land.

The applicant indicated in its narrative that wetlands and contaminated soils can be found on-site, owing to the property's former industrial vocation, and permits will be required to remediate or otherwise address these factors.

Proposed Conditions



The applicant has submitted a site plan and narrative indicating its intent to develop up to 500 townhouse-style residential units (with associated parking, landscaping, and utilities) on the subject parcel. This would be only one component of a comprehensive and coordinated redevelopment of multiple vacant parcels within Centre of New England.

It is understood that, as a separate action, the Receiver Entity will construct the “missing” segment of Centre of New England Blvd as well as repave the top layer of the boulevard along its full length. This will impact access opportunities as shown on the plan. Both Lots 14 and 65 have small, westward-facing “panhandles” which would facilitate roadway connections to the Highlands at Hopkins Hill condo development off Hopkins Hill Road. Lot 65 would also benefit from new roadway connections to Centre of New England Boulevard and to Arnold Road.

Based on the density of the townhouse development shown on the conceptual site plan, it is understood that public sewer and water connections will be a critical component of the project.

Zoning

The subject parcel is currently zoned BP (Business Park), and multifamily residential is not an allowed use in that zone. However, the applicant indicated the following in its Narrative:

*“Based on Consent Orders entered into by the Town in state Receivership proceedings relating to the subject properties, **the zoning requirements are controlled by the Town’s 1997 Zoning Ordinance, which permits multifamily development** and uses permitted in the Business Park (BP) zoning district and dimensional requirements are limited.”*

Because of the legal circumstances unique to the subject parcel, the applicant’s proposal conforms to the dimensional and use regulations as they existed in 1997, and the 1997 version of the Zoning Code is the relevant benchmark against which this project shall be reviewed for zoning conformance. Additional zoning conformance reviews will be conducted once the project has been refined and more information is available.

Interdepartmental Review and Comments

Please see the attached report from the Technical Review Committee (dated June 17, 2024) for interdepartmental comments on this application.

Pre-Application Recommendations

Staff recommend that the Planning Commission allow the applicant to proceed to the Master Plan stage of application and review, based upon the following stipulation:

1. The applicant shall provide a Traffic Study, a Fiscal Impact Statement, a Landscaping Plan, and Architectural Renderings/Imagery with its Master Plan application.