



TOWN OF COVENTRY, RI
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

STAFF REPORT

Project Name:	New London Preserve
Plan Type:	Major Land Development
Plan Review Phase:	Pre-Application
Owner/Applicant:	Alpha Holdings, LLC
Address:	New London Turnpike
Plat / Lot / Zone:	AP 7 Lot 25; AP 8 Lots 2, 3, 9, & 10; and AP 16, Lots 133 & 138 Zone R-20 Lot Size 53.9 acres
Existing Use:	Vacant
Proposed Use:	Townhouse-style dwellings units
Description:	The applicant proposes to develop 90 detached, single-family-style condominium units, each of which would be roughly 2,000 SF in size and include 2-3 bedrooms and an attached two-car garage. The project will also include pedestrian walkways, lighting, landscaping and other site amenities.

Background and Existing Conditions

This item will be reviewed as a Pre-Application for a proposed Major Land Development of a 53.9-acre parcel comprised of seven lots as listed in the title block above.

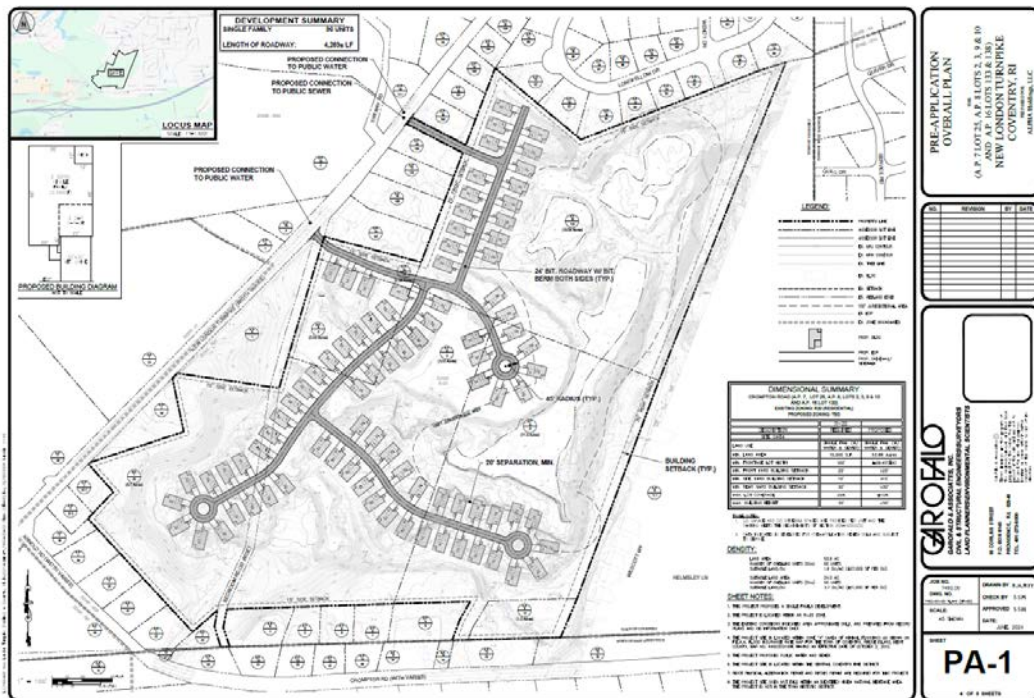


The Pre-Application meeting with the Planning Commission is the first step in the overall application process where no votes are taken, no notification is required, and the applicant does not get an approval or denial on the project. The applicant is provided with initial feedback from the Planning Commission with the intention to help shape the project moving forward. According to the Town's Subdivision Regulations, "...the applicant may request the Planning Commission for an informal concept plan review for a development. The purpose of the concept plan review is also to provide the applicant with Planning Commission input in the formative stages of subdivision and land development concept design."

The subject parcel occupies much of the area inside the angle formed by New London Turnpike and Crompton Road, in the southeastern corner of the town. It consists of undeveloped land which formerly hosted a gravel pit; evidence of this past use can still be seen in the landscape, which includes areas of steep grade changes, manmade wetland features (quarry ponds), and little to no vegetation.

Like all of its abutters, the parcel is zoned R-20. The parcel itself is largely landlocked; sufficient frontage is technically achieved along Bedroom Road (a paper road), but minor right-of-way-width connections to New London Turnpike also offer practical opportunities to connect to the surrounding roadway network.

Proposed Conditions



The applicant has submitted a site plan and narrative indicating its intent to develop 90 single-family dwelling style condominium units on the subject parcel. Each unit would be roughly 2,000 SF in size,

feature two or three bedrooms, and would include an attached two-car garage. The applicant verbally indicated during the July 15, 2024 Technical Review Committee that it is open to providing an affordable housing component to this project, but did not propose a specific percentage at that time.

The development would also feature associated landscaping, walkways, and lighting. Utilities (public water, sewer, gas, and telecommunications) are available nearby on New London Turnpike and are proposed to be extending into the subject parcel to serve the development. Proposed stormwater management would be achieved by subsurface retention/infiltration infrastructure.

At this time, two roadway access points between the proposed development and the existing roadway network are proposed, both of which would interconnect with New London Turnpike. Internal circulation would be facilitated by 24-foot-wide private roadways.

The applicant has indicated that its project will require a Physical Alteration Permits from RIDOT and a RIPDES permit from RIDEM. The applicant intends to furnish more information regarding the potential population and school impacts of its proposal at subsequent phases of project review.

Zoning

Strictly speaking, the applicant's request is not consistent with Zoning standards: multifamily is not an allowed residential use in the subject parcel's R-20 zone, and the number of dwelling units the applicant proposed to build exceeds what Zoning would allow if the project were a single-family subdivision. However, the following section of the Subdivision Regulations explains the pathway by which the applicant can make this request – and the Planning Commission's authority to consider it:

Town of Coventry Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, Article IV, Section 8 (Land Development Projects)

1. Residential land development projects in residential zone.

a. The density set forth in the underlying residential zone shall serve as a guide for the maximum number of dwelling units permitted in a residential land development project (hereafter "baseline density").

b. The baseline density may be altered, at the discretion of the Planning Commission, if it is determined that the land development project:

(1) Is capable of supporting a more intensive use by reason of natural characteristics of the land or existing or planned infrastructure;

(2) Is appropriately designed and reflects the natural characteristics of the land, including its suitability based on soil characteristics, topography, and susceptibility to surface or groundwater pollution;

(3) Will not have a significant adverse impact on existing and planned public and/or private services and facilities, including schools, transportation systems, recreational facilities, police and fire protection.

(4) Will promote a balance of housing choices;

(5) Will be generally compatible with the Coventry Comprehensive Community Plan;

(6) Will be generally compatible with lots in the same or abutting zoning districts;

(7) Will not result in conditions inimical to the public health, safety, and welfare.

The applicant reported on Sheet PA-1a of its plan set that the 53.9-acre subject parcel contains 24.0 acres of land suitable for development, although it did not provide a specific breakdown of its calculation to demonstrate that it followed the methodology described in Article III, Section B (“Land Unsuitable for Development”) of the Subdivision Regulations. Assuming that the calculation properly accounts for wetlands, roadways, and other items noted in that section, the requested density amounts to 3.7 dwelling units per acre, while the baseline density of the R-20 zone is 2.2 units per acre. Therefore, the applicant is requesting a density bonus of 68% above the baseline.

Should the project advance to subsequent phases of review, the Commission can refer to Items 1-7 above when evaluating the merits of the requested density bonus.

Interdepartmental Review and Comments

Please see the attached report from the Technical Review Committee (dated July 15, 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 conditions:

1. The applicant shall provide a Traffic Study and a Fiscal Impact Statement with its Master Plan application. Peer reviews for this and other aspects of the proposal may be initiated at future application stages as needed.
2. The applicant shall refer to the July 15, 2024 Technical Review Committee report for guidance on information to supply and plan edits to make at the Master Plan application.



TOWN OF COVENTRY

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TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: July 15, 2024
PROJECT NAME: "New London Preserve"
PROPERTIES: AP 7, Lot 25; AP 8, Lots 2, 3, 9 & 10; AP 16, Lots 133 & 138
ADDRESS: New London Turnpike
ZONE: R-20 (Residential)
OWNER/APPLICANT: Alpha Holdings, LLC

This matter came before the Coventry Technical Review Committee at its July 15, 2024 meeting as a Pre-Application for a Major Land Development project in accordance with Article V, § D.4. of the Coventry Subdivision & Land Development Regulations.

An application and plan were submitted for review on July 2, 2024. The applicant proposes to develop 90 detached, single-family-style condominium units, each of which would be roughly 2,000 SF in size and include 2-3 bedrooms and an attached two-car garage. The project will also include pedestrian walkways, lighting, landscaping and other site amenities.

The members of the Technical Review Committee reviewed the following documents related to this application when preparing the below comments:

New London Preserve - Narrative.pdf
New London Preserve - Pre-App Plan Set.pdf

TOWN ENGINEER

- There needs to be a turnaround at the end of the road located on the north end of the site.
- There are existing groundwater issues at the existing homes that abut the site on Longfellow Drive. Post-development stormwater runoff conditions must not result in peak run-off increases in rate or volume from than pre-construction conditions.
- Engineering takes no exception to the proposed 24' wide road. The addition of a sidewalk will need to be discussed with the Planning Department.
- Are streetlights proposed for the project?
- A Coventry Sewer Connection Permit Application will need to be submitted for the project. The applicant shall be responsible for costs associated with the engineering analysis to determine the capacity adequacy of the existing 15" gravity sewer line in New London Turnpike.

PRINCIPAL PLANNER

- The applicant will need to quantify the scale of the density bonus they are seeking from the Planning Commission under the “Land Development Project” tool.
- Planning Staff are looking for this project to incorporate deed-restricted affordable housing units.
- The applicant shall provide a traffic study at Preliminary Plan submission.
- Planning Staff requests the applicant explore the potential merits of establishing a roadway connection between the proposed development and Crompton Rd.
- The RI Historical Cemeteries Database appears to indicate a historic cemetery (Varnum Mitchell Cemetery, #CY105) is located on Lot 138. The applicant must verify the cemetery’s location and ensure that the southerly roadway connection to New London Turnpike accommodates both the cemetery itself and its required 25-foot buffer as part of its Master Plan submission.
- Peer reviews for specific aspects of the proposal, including but not limited to traffic, stormwater, environmental, and construction, may be initiated at future stages as needed.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

- Road configuration should include sidewalks, on at least one side for pedestrian safety
- There needs to be a turn-around installed on the northern most roadway
- Storm drainage needs to have careful design. There is currently water leaching from this property affecting the ground water elevation in the Longfellow Drive neighborhood. If the proposed storm drainage system proposed included any tie-in to New London Turnpike, a study of the existing capacity on New London Turnpike needs to be conducted at design.
- Will access points to Crompton Road be abandoned?
- Is the proposed 45’ cul-de-sac radius sufficient for emergency vehicles? A majority of cul-de-sac designs in town are 60’ radius.
- A Traffic Study should be performed on New London Turnpike to include existing traffic, proposed traffic in the area and traffic generated from this proposal.
- Will the roadway system in this project be public or private?

FIRE REPRESENTATIVE

- Fire department access
- Meet fire flows requirements

POLICE CHIEF

- This project by itself does not seem to raise many issues in regards to traffic but with all of the other proposed development projects in the area, it should be included in a traffic study that encompasses all of the proposed projects.

PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR

The Planning Commission Chair recused as this item will be heard before the Planning Commission.