



TOWN OF COVENTRY, RI
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

STAFF REPORT

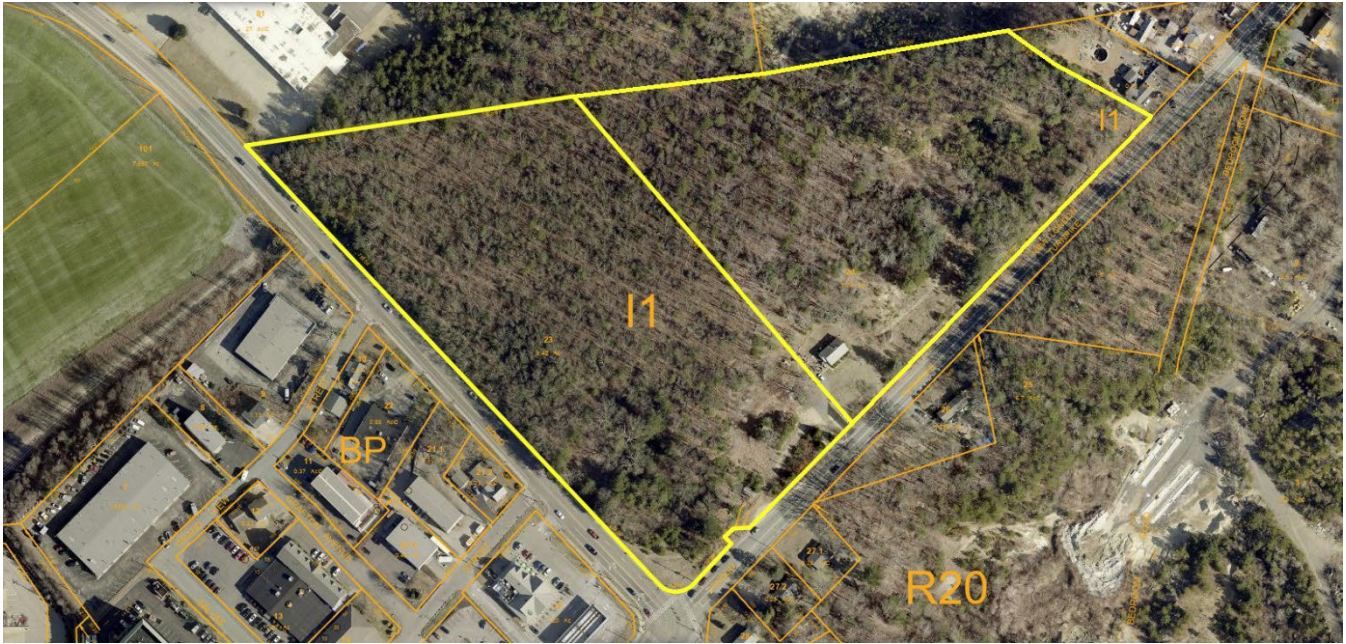
Project Name:	Coventry Centre
Plan Type:	Major Land Development with associated Zone Change
Plan Review Phase:	Master Plan
Owners:	Bernard L., Liv T., and Christopher LeFoley (Lot 23) David T. & Christine Olton (Lot 24)
Applicant:	Starr Capital, LLC
Address:	666 Arnold Rd (Lot 23) and 2271 New London Turnpike (Lot 24)
Plat / Lot / Zone:	AP 7 Lots 23 and 24 Zone I-1 Lot Size 17 acres
Existing Use:	Single-family house
Proposed Use:	Commercial (Lot 23) and Multifamily Residential (Lot 24)
Description:	Applicant proposes to develop a commercial project on Lot 23 and a multifamily residential project on Lot 24. The commercial project would include 48,000 GSF of commercial space, with a mix of retail, restaurant, drive-thru, and gas station/convenience store uses. The multifamily residential project would include 218 units across four buildings, 18% of which would be deed-restricted as affordable housing. This proposal includes a corresponding Zone Change Application which will be subject to a recommendation by the Planning Commission and ultimately decided by the Town Council.

Background

This item previously came before the Planning Commission as a Pre-Application at the February 26, 2025 meeting for a proposed Major Land Development with a Zone Change of a 17-acre subject parcel comprised of two lots: AP 7, Lots 23 (8.6 acres) and 24 (8.4 acres). At that time, the applicant shared two conceptual site plans, one all-commercial and another mixed-use (residential and commercial), but both of which would redevelop the subject parcel as a single site. For this Master Plan application, the applicant has instead proposed to develop the subject parcel's two constituent lots as separate projects, segregating commercial development to Lot 23 and multifamily residential development to Lot 24.

The applicant has submitted a draft Traffic Study, Parking Analysis, Fiscal Impact Study, Planning Report, Lighting Narrative, and proposed Ordinance in support of its Master Plan application. Staff anticipates the applicant will submit a formal Lighting Plan and formal architectural renderings in support of its Preliminary Plan submittal.

Existing Conditions



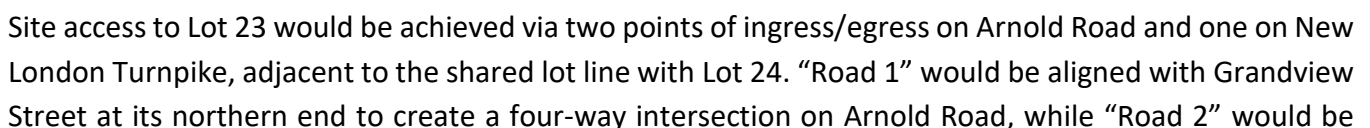
The subject parcel forms a large wedge on the inside angle formed by the corner of Arnold Road and New London Turnpike. Lot 23 is a corner lot with just over 1,000 feet of frontage along Arnold Rd and an additional 400 feet of frontage on New London Turnpike. Lot 24, for its part, features about 750 feet of frontage on New London Turnpike.

Both lots are zoned I-1 (Industrial) and largely consist of wooded, undeveloped land. One single-family house can be found near the southernmost corner of Lot 24; two dilapidated outbuildings stand nearby along New London Turnpike on Lot 23.

As noted in the plan set, the subject parcel lies within Flood Zone X. There are no wetlands or watercourses on or within 200 feet of the perimeter of the subject parcel, and the parcel does not lie within a groundwater protection area. However, the parcel does fall within the overlay of a Natural Heritage Area. Additionally, a RIDEM permit will be required because the project will disturb more than one acre of land.

Proposed Conditions

The applicant is proposing to develop the subject parcel in two separate “phases” or projects, with development of Lot 23 preceding development of Lot 24. Based on the scale of development shown on both conceptual site plans, it is understood that the applicant will be pursuing public sewer and water connections. A site plan providing a general overview of the proposed layout of both lots can be seen on the following page:



aligned to create a four-way intersection with Gay Street and re-emerge on New London Turnpike. Both of Road 2's intersections would limit ingress/egress to right-turn only to minimize potential impacts to the busy Arnold/New London intersection.

The project on Lot 24 would construct 218 multifamily residential units (18% of which would be deed-restricted as affordable housing) distributed across four buildings. Buildings 10, 11, and 12 would each be four stories tall and contain either 56 (Buildings 11 and 12) or 66 (Building 13) units. In contrast, Building 13 (located closest to New London Turnpike) would be three stories tall and contain 40 units. A total of 327 parking spaces would be provided for the multifamily residential development on Lot 24. Buildings 10, 11, and 12 would be arranged around a triangular, landscaped courtyard at the center of the lot. Site access to Lot 24 would be achieved through a single point of ingress/egress on New London Turnpike near the far end of Lot 24 from the busy Arnold/New London intersection. A small pedestrian walkway adjacent to Building 10 constitutes the only form of inter-parcel access the applicant has proposed.

As noted in the Background section of this report, the applicant submitted a Traffic Impact and Access Study (prepared by VHB) in support of its proposal. This study has been designed not only to examine the traffic impacts of the development program for the subject parcel itself, but also to quantify the overall growth in traffic volumes anticipated in and around the Centre of New England Blvd. region. This is critical given the substantial amount of residential and commercial development occurring in this corner of Coventry, for the purposes of both identifying necessary infrastructure improvements and for understanding the relative share of each project's contribution to the overall traffic growth that warrants the improvements.

The Town has initiated a peer review through Pare Corporation of the applicant's Traffic and Parking Studies. Staff generally find the Traffic Study's framework and methodology appropriate for the desired scope, but several important deficiencies were identified by Staff and the peer reviewer, namely the lack of a traffic safety study with firm crash data and the omission of several significant proposed developments from the No Build baseline on which future traffic projections were based (the 333-unit Vue Apartments and a drive-thru cannabis dispensary, both along Centre of New England Boulevard in West Greenwich; and Starr Capital's intentions for Development Parcels 5-8, which were informally ballparked during previous discussions as potentially totaling 700 residential units).

While the Traffic Study does propose several roadway improvements for consideration, and Staff intend to recommend a few targeted improvements to facilitate non-motorized circulation as well, given the deficiencies in the existing report, Staff will hold comment on these matters until a revised Traffic Study can be submitted with more robust safety data and No-Build assumptions.

Zoning (Proposed Ordinance)

This proposal relies upon a companion Zone Change ordinance which proposes to re-designate Lots 23 and 24 as a Planned Development District (PD) entitled "Coventry Centre Planned District" featuring a slate of residential and commercial uses, as well as new dimensional standards, which are distinct from the existing dimensional and use regulations associated with the subject parcel's current I-1 (Industrial) zoning.

The proposed ordinance has been written to allow for a degree of flexibility in how the applicant chooses to balance residential and commercial development on both Lots 23 and 24 in case market conditions favor an approach to developing both parcels as a unified project akin to the concepts floated during the Pre-Application phase.

This flexibility is primarily facilitated by Gross Floor Area standards applying collectively to Lots 23 and 24: a maximum of 120,000 SF of non-residential GFA is allowed; for each residential unit, the maximum non-residential GFA is reduced by 200 SF; and the number of residential units is capped at 600. Parking requirements are proposed as a minimum of 4 spaces per 1,000 SF of gross floor area for non-residential uses and 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit.

Planning Staff generally support the proposed dimensional and use regulations and feel that the subject parcel is better-suited to host residential and commercial uses rather than industrial uses, though Staff are aware that the applicant intends to propose minor revisions to a few dimensional standards elaborated in the version of the proposed ordinance that was submitted to the Town Council for a First Reading. The applicant's proposed revisions relate to building height and roof forms, and it is anticipated this the applicant will present on this topic at the July 23 Hearing.

Additionally, the proposed ordinance includes a brief section discussing architectural standards pertaining to roof lines and building materials, namely that the buildings shall be designed with traditional roof forms and use natural materials for the buildings' exteriors. Following the applicant's submittal of architectural examples or other visuals to indicate their desired development style, Planning Staff will seek the Commission's guidance as to whether the proposed architectural standards should apply to both Lots 23 and 24, or only Lot 23 (as the more visible of the two).

Staff raises this question because the ordinance contains two caveats – that parapets and faux roofs may be used to screen flat roofs, and that metal may be used as an exterior material for decorative purposes. Staff understands the applicant believes that the multifamily buildings on Lot 24 must have flat roofs and desires to install decorative metal panels on the exterior of these buildings. The essential question Staff poses to the Commission is whether faux rooflines on buildings with modern accents such as metal panels will look sufficiently out-of-place that it would be ill-advised to require faux rooflines in the first place.

Interdepartmental Review and Comments

Please see the attached report from the Technical Review Committee (dated July 14, 2025) for interdepartmental comments on this application.

Recommendation

Given the deficiencies noted in the applicant's Traffic Impact and Access Study, Staff does NOT have a specific recommendation on this project at this time. As such, Staff recommends the Planning Commission utilize the July 23, 2025 meeting to hear the applicant's presentation, consider the issues being presented, and vote to **continue** the review of the Master Plan Application and Public Hearing to the August 27, 2025 Planning Commission meeting. Staff further recommends the applicant submit a revised Traffic Study and architectural examples/visuals by August 5, 2025 to facilitate the TRC and Commission's review of these supplemental materials.



TOWN OF COVENTRY

Department of Planning & Development

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TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: July 14, 2025
PROJECT NAME: "Coventry Centre"
PROPERTIES: AP 7, Lots 23 & 24
ADDRESS: 666 Arnold Road (Lot 23) and 2271 New London Turnpike (Lot 24)
ZONE: I-1 (Industrial)
OWNER: Bernard L., Liv T., and Christopher LeFoley (Lot 23); David T. & Christine Olton (Lot 24)
APPLICANT: Starr Capital, LLC

This matter came before the Coventry Technical Review Committee at its July 14, 2025 meeting as a Master Plan Application for a Major Land Development project with an associated Zone Change in accordance with Article V, § D.4. of the Coventry Subdivision & Land Development Regulations.

An application and plan were initially submitted for review on May 30, 2025. The applicant proposes to develop a commercial project on Lot 23 and a multifamily residential project on Lot 24. The commercial project would include 48,000 GSF of commercial space, with a mix of retail, Page 1 of 2 restaurant, drive-thru, and gas station/convenience store uses. The multifamily residential project would include 218 units across four buildings, 18% of which would be deed-restricted as affordable housing. This proposal includes a corresponding Zone Change Application which will be subject to a recommendation by the Planning Commission and ultimately decided by the Town Council.

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

Coventry Centre - Traffic Impact and Access Study - May 2025.pdf
Coventry Centre - Comp Plan Consistency Analysis dated 2025-07-02.pdf
Coventry Centre - Fiscal Impact Statement - April 2025.pdf
Coventry Centre - KCWA Water Availability Letter dated 2025-04-25.pdf
Coventry Centre - Lighting Narrative dated 2025-07-01.pdf
Coventry Centre - Master Plan Set dated 2025-05-30.pdf
Coventry Centre - Parking Assessment dated 2025-05-30.pdf
Coventry Centre - Proposed Ordinance Establishing Planned District.pdf

TOWN ENGINEER

General

- 1) Upon project completion, a Certificate of Conformance (COC) from the Engineer of Record (EOR) shall be required. The COC shall certify that the constructed project meets all required standards, regulations and specifications in the permitting and construction documents. The COC shall be focused on site civil related work. Work includes but is not limited to; all drainage system components, drainage related to retaining wall placement, earth grading, roadway subbase, pavement, concrete flatwork, underground utilities (sewer, electric, water, etc.), survey markers and monuments and fire cisterns. EOR shall partner with a qualified sub-consultant to perform necessary inspection related duties if EOR does not perform these duties in-house. All coordination between EOR and inspection sub-consultant shall be finalized before construction commences. Separate COCs shall be required from the Structural Engineer of Record (SEOR) and the Geotechnical Engineer of Record (GEOR) as applicable. A certificate of occupancy will not be issued until COCs are received and accepted by the town.

Plans

- 1) Submission of a Town of Coventry Soil Erosion and Sediment Control (SESC) Application will be required for the project.
- 2) A Town of Coventry Sewer Connection Application will be required for the proposed sewer connection.
- 3) Stormwater management shall be provided for the site and meet state and town requirements.

Parking Assessment

- 1) Engineering takes no exception to the proposed multifamily residential parking reduction.

Traffic Study

Consistent with the planning staff comments, the engineering department is anticipating updates to the existing traffic study prepared by VHB. Once a revised study is received, comments will be provided.

PRINCIPAL PLANNER DESIGNEE

- This proposal relies upon a companion Zone Change ordinance which proposes a slate of residential and commercial uses, as well as new dimensional standards, which are distinct from the existing dimensional and use regulations associated with the subject parcel's current I-1 (Industrial) zoning. The proposed ordinance has been written to allow for a degree of flexibility in how the applicant chooses to balance residential and commercial development in case market conditions favor some uses over others. This is primarily facilitated by Gross Floor Area standards applying collectively to Lots 23 and 24: a maximum of 120,000 SF of non-residential GFA is allowed; for each residential unit, the maximum non-residential GFA is reduced by 200 SF; and the number of residential units is capped at 600. It should be noted this immediate Master Plan application is seeking 218 housing units and 48,000 SF of commercial space. Planning Staff generally support the proposed dimensional and use regulations and feel that the subject parcel is better-suited to host residential and commercial uses rather than industrial uses.
- Consistent with initial feedback from the Town's contracted peer reviewer for traffic and parking issues, the applicant's Traffic Study should be revised to include all proposed developments in the region as part of their analysis of No-Build Conditions.
- Consistent with initial peer reviewer feedback, the applicant's Traffic Study should also be revised to incorporate a traffic safety study with crash data to understand whether any operational or geometric conditions may warrant design solutions.

- Following receipt of the revised Traffic Study, Planning Staff and the peer reviewer will provide more detailed comments regarding the overall traffic analysis as well as the proposed roadway and intersection improvements that will be needed at the intersection of New London Turnpike and Arnold Road. Staff notes that the proposed widening of adjacent roadway segments near the intersection of New London Turnpike and Arnold Road would likely be accommodated through transfer of property from the subject parcel to the public right-of-way. Planning Staff anticipates the applicant, along with other developers in the immediate vicinity, will continue to coordinate with the Town regarding off-site traffic improvements/mitigations.
- Planning Staff agrees with the peer reviewer's suggestion to update the Traffic Study roughly six months after the Centre of New England Boulevard connection is completed by conducting new traffic counts to confirm accuracy of the current Study's post-connection traffic distribution estimates. The updated Study can be provided with the Preliminary Plan submittal.
- Planning Staff believes that promoting non-motorized means of transportation (pedestrian, bicycle, and bus) through practical infrastructure improvements will be critical to minimizing motorized traffic impacts, such as increased roadway congestion, to the greatest extent possible. The applicant's Traffic Study proposes to install sidewalks along the full lengths of the subject parcel's Arnold Road and New London Turnpike frontages. The existing sidewalks end 1,000 feet away from the subject parcel on Arnold Road, and (post-construction of the Willow Lakes development) 300 feet away from the subject parcel on New London Turnpike. Staff proposes the applicant truncate its proposed Arnold Road sidewalk about 350 feet before the end of the parcel's frontage, and instead complete the 300-foot gap in the New London Turnpike sidewalk network by building sidewalks in front of AP 16, Lots 1 and 2 as an off-site improvement.
- The applicant shall coordinate with Planning Staff regarding logical crosswalk treatments near termini of the future sidewalks on Arnold Road and New London Turnpike prior to submitting the Preliminary Plan application.
- Prior to submittal of the Preliminary Plan application, the applicant shall evaluate the feasibility of constructing the proposed sidewalks along the subject parcel's Arnold and New London frontages as shared-use paths to provide bicyclists a safer means of traveling through the busy Arnold/New London intersection than sharing the roadway lanes.
- The applicant shall coordinate with Planning Staff prior to the submittal of the Preliminary Plan application to ensure the proposed internal pathways provide for sufficient intra- and inter-parcel access for pedestrians and/or cyclists.
- The applicant shall coordinate with the Town and RIPTA while developing its Preliminary Plan application to explore options for improving the existing RIPTA Route 23 northbound stop (corner of Arnold Road and Gay Street) to promote public transit access to the subject parcel.
- Planning Staff anticipates receiving architectural examples/visuals with the Master Plan application to inform the architectural standards proposed in the draft ordinance. Following submittal of same, Staff will seek the Planning Commission's guidance as to whether the proposed architectural standards should apply to both Lots 23 and 24, or only Lot 23 (as the more visible of the two).
- A formal Lighting Plan and formal architectural renderings are anticipated to be submitted with the Preliminary Plan application.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

- Concrete sidewalks should extend northerly on New London Turnpike to include AP 16, Lots 1 and 2 to complete the sidewalk connection on that side of the road.

- Extend the merge lane on Arnold Road further to the west as “Road #1” will create an issue with entering/exiting traffic on Arnold Road @ Gay Street.

FIRE REPRESENTATIVE

- A water supply study will be required to confirm there is adequate water flow to handle fire protection for the entire proposed complex.

POLICE CHIEF

- The Police Department is awaiting a traffic study and peer review prior to making any comments.

PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR

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