



**TOWN OF COVENTRY, RI
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

STAFF REPORT

Project Name:	Jefferson Pines
Plan Type:	Comprehensive Permit / Major Land Development
Plan Review Phase:	Pre-Application
Owners:	PeachBudz, LLC
Applicant:	LaCroix Holdings, LLC
Address:	49-87 Jefferson Drive
Plat / Lot / Zone:	AP 28 Lots 40.3 – 40.6 Zone GB Lot Size 1.54 Acres
Existing Use:	Vacant
Proposed Use:	One (1) 32-unit multi-family residential building
Description:	Applicant proposes to construct a 16,000 SF, two-story building containing 32 residential units on approximately 1.5 acres of land as a Comprehensive Permit. A minimum of 25% of the proposed units must be deed-restricted as affordable.

Background and Process

This item will be reviewed as a Pre-Application for a proposed Comprehensive Permit / Major Land Development of an approximately 1.54-acre subject parcel comprised of four lots: AP 28, Lots 40.3, 40.4, 40.5, and 40.6.

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."*

A Comprehensive Permit is an application where, according to RIGL §45-53-4, *"Any applicant proposing to build low- or moderate-income housing may submit to the local review board a single application for a comprehensive permit to build that housing in lieu of separate applications to the applicable local boards. This procedure is only available for proposals in which at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the housing is low- or moderate-income housing."* In exchange for these affordable units, the applicant is

given a density bonus for the number of units they are allowed to build on the property. Relevant to this case, State Law §45-53-4 (b)(1)(i) states *“For properties connected to public sewer and water, or eligible to be connected to public sewer and water based on written confirmation from each respective service provider, the density bonus for a project that provides at least twenty-five percent (25%) low- and moderate-income housing shall be at least five (5) units per acre.”*

The subject parcel will have public water and sewer access, as will be discussed in greater detail in the proposed conditions section. In addition to the state-enabled density bonus, the applicant can also seek waivers from the local zoning code and subdivision regulations to achieve their project vision. Lastly, a Comprehensive Permit Application is not currently subject to the Master Plan stage of review, though the General Assembly is expected to pass a new law to add an optional Master Plan this summer. As of June 2025, the next stage of application after preapplication is the Preliminary Plan stage in which all detailed plan and engineering is to be submitted for review.

State law also provides for a single body to act on all forms of land use relief as it relates to the Comprehensive Permit. More particularly, state law provides that *“The local review board (Planning Commission) has the same power to issue permits or approvals that any local board or official who would otherwise act with respect to the application...”* For Coventry, this is the Planning Commission. As such the Planning Commission has the exclusive authority to grant a zone change (normally reserved for the Town Council) and a variance (normally reserved for the Zoning Board of Review), as well as those matters typically reserved for the Planning Commission.

In **approving** a Comprehensive Permit, the Planning commission must make the following findings of fact, with close scrutiny on point number 1:

1. The proposed development is consistent with local needs as identified in the local comprehensive community plan with particular emphasis on the community’s affordable housing plan and/or has satisfactorily addressed the issues where there may be inconsistencies.
2. The proposed development is in compliance with the standards and provisions of the municipality’s zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, and/or where adjustments are requested by the applicant, that local concerns that have been affected by the relief granted do not outweigh the state and local need for low- and moderate-income housing.
3. All low- and moderate-income housing units proposed are integrated throughout the development; are compatible in scale and architectural style to the market rate units within the project; and will be built and occupied prior to, or simultaneous with the construction and occupancy of any market rate units.

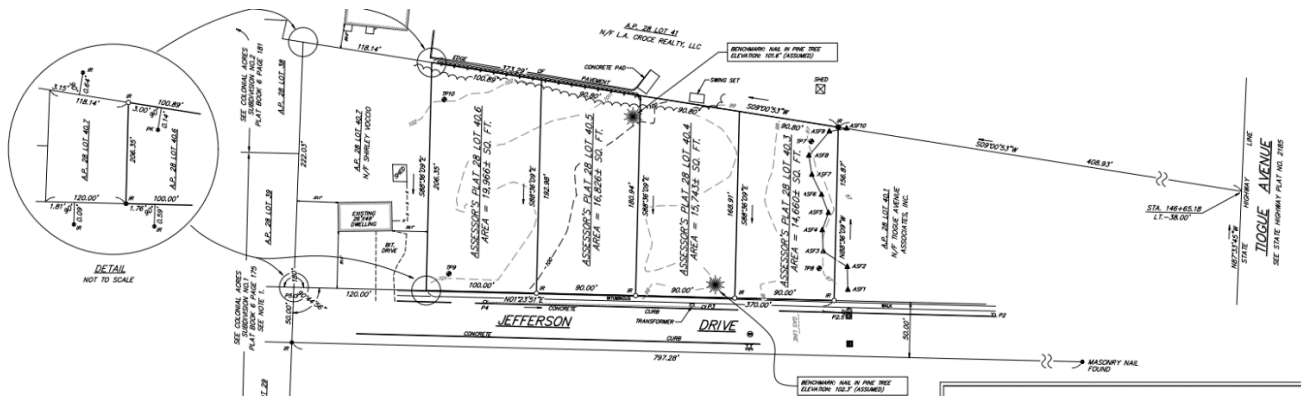
4. There will be no significant negative impacts on the health and safety of current or future residents of the community, in areas including, but not limited to, safe circulation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, provision of emergency services, sewerage disposal, availability of potable water, adequate surface water run-off, and the preservation of natural, historical, or cultural features that contribute to the attractiveness of the community.
5. All proposed land developments and all subdivisions lots will have adequate and permanent physical access to a public street in accordance with the requirements of § 45-23-60(a)(5).
6. The proposed development will not result in the creation of individual lots with any physical constraints to development that building on those lots according to pertinent regulations and building standards would be impracticable, unless created only as permanent open space or permanently reserved for a public purpose on the approved, recorded plans.

The Planning Commission may **deny** an application for a Comprehensive Permit if:

1. The Town has an approved affordable housing plan and is meeting housing needs, and the proposal is inconsistent with the affordable housing plan; provided that, the local review board also finds that the municipality has made significant progress in implementing that housing plan.
2. The proposal is not consistent with local needs, including, but not limited to, the needs identified in an approved comprehensive plan, and/or local zoning ordinances and procedures promulgated in conformance with the comprehensive plan
3. The proposal is not in conformance with the Comprehensive plan.
4. The community has met or plans to meet the goal of ten percent (10%) of the year-round units or, in the case of an urban town or city, fifteen percent (15%) of the occupied rental housing units as defined in § 45-53-3(5)(i) being low- and moderate-income housing; provided that, the local review board also finds that the community has achieved or has made significant progress towards meeting the goals required by this section.
5. Concerns for the environment and the health and safety of current residents have not been adequately addressed.
6. "Consistent with local needs" means reasonable in view of the state need for low- and moderate-income housing, considered with the number of low-income persons in the town ... and the need to protect the health and safety of the occupants of the proposed housing or of the residence

(sic) of the...town, to promote better building design in relation to the surroundings, or to preserve open spaces ...¹

Existing Conditions

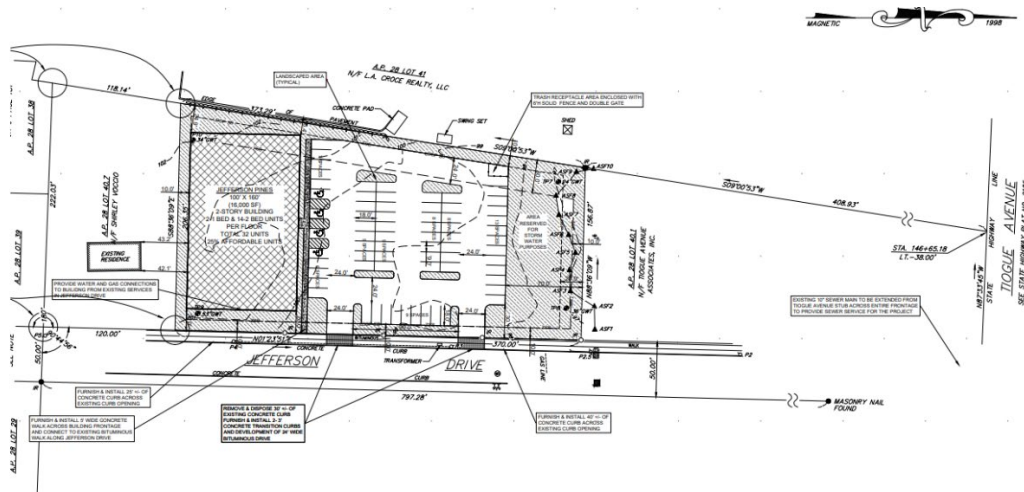


The subject parcel is zoned GB (General Business) and currently comprised of four wooded, vacant lots (Lots 40.3, 40.4, 40.5, and 40.6). At 982 Tiogue Avenue, the direct abutter to the north of the proposed development, there is a commercial complex that hosts a physical therapy office and an urgent care facility. To the south, the subject parcel is abutted by lots zoned R-20 (Residential) that host single-family dwelling units. As identified on the site plan, the property's direct southerly abutter is an existing single-family house at 95 Jefferson Drive. Glenwood Park Apartments, an existing multi-family apartment building located at 978 Tiogue Avenue, abuts the subject parcel to the west. According to Tax Assessor data, Glenwood Park Apartments hosts 63 total units on a 4.8-acre parcel of land, for a total density of 13.13 units per acre.

The applicant indicated in its narrative that there are no wetlands on the site, though the Natural Resource Services, Inc. determined that an Area Subject to Flooding (ASF) is located along the northern property line. Additionally, the subject parcels are situated within "Zone X" (an area of minimal flooding) according to the 2015 Flood Insurance Rate Map for Coventry.

¹ RIGL §45-53-3 (4)

Proposed Conditions



The applicant has submitted a conceptual site plan and narrative indicating its intent to build one (1) multi-family apartment building containing a total of 32 residential units on approximately 1.54 acres of land, which amounts to **20.78 units per acre**. Eight (8) of these units will be designated as LMIH.

Planning Staff notes that this development is being proposed as a state-enabled Comprehensive Permit Application with access to public water and sewer and 25% of the proposed units designated as LMIH units, which makes it eligible for a density bonus of 5 units per acre. The 1.54-acre subject parcel is located in the GB (General Business) zone, and therefore it is not afforded any underlying residential density. Based solely on the 5 unit per acre bonus, the minimum number of residential units allowed for this development is 7.7 total units.

This project would administratively merge the four lots into one, and the apartment building would be constructed within a building envelope with 10-foot side setbacks, 20-foot front setbacks, and 16.4-foot rear setbacks. Aside from the rear setbacks, the proposed dimensions will conform to the required GB dimensional standards. Primary access to the proposed development will be from Jefferson Drive; the applicant has proposed 24-foot wide access drives into the housing development. The applicant's proposed parking plan provides a total of 69 parking spaces, which exceeds the required 2 spaces per dwelling unit (64 total spaces) established by the Town of Coventry's parking regulations.

This project would require an extension of the existing 10-inch sewer main up Jefferson Drive terminating at the most southerly property corner, with a service connection to the proposed building. The applicant has discussed the limits of this sewer extension with the Department of Public Works, and will provide designs for the proposed extension and connection at future stages of review. The applicant will also submit designs for the proposed connection to Kent County Water Authority public water systems in advance of future review stages.

The applicant will further evaluate the need for a RIDEM permits as the estimated Limits of Disturbance (LOD) exceed 1 acre. In addition to the aforementioned permits and required sewer and water approvals, this project might also require the Town approval for drives and revisions to the curb line, RI Energy approvals for gas and electric connections, and cable and phone services. The applicant reports that RI Housing and/or Coventry Housing Authority will likely serve as the monitoring agent for the proposed affordable units.

Zoning

The subject parcel is currently zoned GB (General Business) which prohibits all residential uses. The Comprehensive Permit application allows for the use of multi-family and dimensional “waivers” can be sought without triggering a formal variance application. The applicant has provided the Town with an itemization of waivers: (1) for rear setbacks, the applicant proposes 16.4 feet where 30 feet is required; (2) for lot coverage, the applicant proposes 66.9% where 60% is the maximum, and (3) multi-family uses are currently not allowed in any zoning district.

Interdepartmental Review and Comments

Please see the attached report from the Technical Review Committee (dated May 19, 2025) for interdepartmental comments on this application.

Pre-Application Recommendations

Staff recommend that the applicant proceeds to the next stage of application and review with consideration of any direction provided by the Planning Commission during the June 25th meeting, as well as comments provided by the Technical Review Committee. Additionally, Staff recommend the applicant address the following points with its next submittal:

1. The applicant should consider decreasing their proposed density, to be closer to the minimum allowance of 7.7 total units. As an alternative, the applicant may wish to consider increasing the percentage of units designated as LMIH, to be more in line with those higher density allowances afforded through state law. Some combination of the above two considerations may also be appropriate.
2. The applicant should consider increasing the separation distance between the proposed apartment building and the nearby single-family house at 95 Jefferson Drive, and should provide sufficient buffers and/or screening to mitigate potential issues.
3. The applicant should consider how it can reduce impervious surface coverage and provide stormwater management strategies to better protect natural resources and surrounding properties. The site contains an Area Subject to Flooding and lies within an area of high-water table.

4. At the next stage of review the applicant shall provide the following (in addition to other required info):
 - (1) Letter of Eligibility from RI Housing as well as project Pro Forma;
 - (2) Traffic Study that will be subject to peer review;
 - (3) Landscape Plan to indicate the proposed content of all buffers; and
 - (4) Sewer "Will Serve" letter with flow calculations and any sewer capacity analysis to achieve the same. The applicant must also show locations of sewer and water lines in proximity to the project site.



TOWN OF COVENTRY

Department of Planning & Development

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TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: June 16, 2025
PROJECT NAME: "Jefferson Pines"
PROPERTIES: AP 28, Lots 40.3 – 40.6
ADDRESS: 49-87 Jefferson Drive
ZONE: GB (General Business)
OWNER: PeachBudz, LLC
APPLICANT: LaCroix Holdings, LLC

This matter came before the Coventry Technical Review Committee at its June 16, 2025 meeting as a Pre-Application Plan for a Major Land Development in accordance with Article V, § D.4. of the Coventry Subdivision & Land Development Regulations.

An application and plan were submitted for review on May 23, 2025. The applicant proposes to construct a 16,000 SF, two-story building containing 32 residential units on approximately 1.5 acres of land as a Comprehensive Permit. The resulting density would be 20.8 units/acre. A minimum of 25% of the proposed units must be deed-restricted as affordable.

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

Jefferson Pines Pre-App Narrative.pdf
Jefferson Pines Pre-App Plan Set.pdf

TOWN ENGINEER

General

- 1) Upon project completion, a Certificate of Conformance (COC) from the Civil Engineer of Record (CEOR) 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. CEOR 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.
- 4) Wheel blocks shall be required in parking spaces that abut the proposed sidewalk.
- 5) Engineering takes exception to the 6.9% lot coverage exceedance.

PRINCIPAL PLANNER

- Planning Staff notes that this development is being proposed as a state-enabled Comprehensive Permit Application (per RIGL § 45-53-4) with access to public water and sewer and 25% of the proposed units designated as LMIH units, which makes it eligible for a density bonus of an additional 5 units per acre.
- The 1.54-acre subject parcel is located in the GB (General Business) zone, and therefore it is not afforded any underlying residential density. Based solely on the 5 unit per acre bonus, the minimum number of residential units allowed for this development is 7.7 total units.
- The proposed apartment building will have 32 total units, which amounts to a density bonus of 20.78 units per acre. Planning staff recommends that the applicant reconsider their proposed density, to be closer to the minimum of 7.7 total units, or increase the percentage of units designated as LMIH, to allow for greater density according to state law.
 - Per RIGL § 45-53-4, the applicant can designate 50% of their units as LMIH and achieve a density bonus of 9 units per acre and therefore be entitled to a total number of 13.86 units. At 100% LMIH, and achieve a density bonus of 12 units per acre and therefore be entitled to a total number of 18.48 units.
- Planning staff notes that this project will require waivers for rear setbacks, maximum lot coverage, and multi-family residential use, among other issues.
 - For rear setbacks, the applicant proposes 16.4' where 30' is required.
 - For lot coverage, the applicant proposes 66.9% where 60% is the maximum.
 - Multi-family is currently not allowed in any zoning district.
- Per the Subdivision Regulations (Article XIII B. Street Design Standards) that applicant will be required to plant street trees and install streetlights on the subject property. Planning staff notes that there is an existing sidewalk that extends along the full length of the subject parcel's frontage of Jefferson Drive.
- The applicant should consider increasing the separation distance between the proposed apartment building and the nearby single-family house at 95 Jefferson Drive, and should provide sufficient buffers and/or screening to mitigate potential issues.
- At the next stage of review the applicant shall provide the following (in addition to other required info):
 - Letter of Eligibility from RI Housing as well as project Pro Forma.
 - A Traffic Study that will be subject to peer review.
 - A Landscape Plan to indicate the proposed content of all buffers.
 - Sewer "Will Serve" letter with flow calculations and any sewer capacity analysis to achieve the same.

- Show locations of sewer and water lines in proximity to the project site.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

There is an existing high-water table in the area affecting properties near the Tiogue Avenue properties. Storm water controls need to take these water tables into consideration during design. When utilities are extended down Jefferson Drive, the roadway will need to be repaved curb to curb as this is a recently repaved roadway. A soils condition report needs to be provided in order to determine the structural needs of any imported soils. A vegetative buffer should be included along the property, AP 28, Lot 40.7.

FIRE REPRESENTATIVE

- Water supply for fire suppression purposes for the proposed building must meet the minimum requirements set by NFPA.
- Street lighting and parking lot lighting should be installed to assist with night operations and apparatus placement.

POLICE CHIEF

- A traffic study should be completed at the next stage in the process in order to properly evaluate the impact this development would have on the traffic in the area. A peer review of the traffic study may also be required in the future.

PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR

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