

MEMORANDUM

TO: Doug McLean, Director of Planning and Development

FROM: Weston & Sampson

DATE: August 24, 2026

SUBJECT: Zoning Provisions for Uses Previously Allowed by Special Use Permit

As part of the ongoing update to Coventry's land use regulations, Weston & Sampson has prepared this memorandum as cover to the document titled "Recommended Regulatory Approach by Use. This memo is new, but the aforementioned document was included in the Planning Commission's physical packet in advance of the August 26 meeting. The tables are intended to support discussion of how individual uses should be regulated and where existing special use permit requirements may be replaced by by-right approval or objective performance standards.

The first table, **Recommended Regulatory Approach by Use**, organizes selected uses from the Coventry Zoning Ordinance into three preliminary regulatory approaches:

- By Right – uses that generally have limited land use impacts and may not warrant additional use-specific review or standards;
- Performance Standards – uses that may be appropriate without case-by-case discretionary review where predictable impacts can be addressed through objective standards; and
- Case-by-Case – uses with characteristics or potential impacts that may continue to warrant individualized review.

The classifications shown in the table are recommendations for discussion and are not intended to represent final determinations. Prior to the August 26 meeting, the Commission is asked to consider whether the individual uses are appropriately assigned to these three categories or whether particular uses should be reassigned. This advance consideration will allow the August 26 discussion to focus on areas of agreement and those uses for which a different regulatory approach may be appropriate.

The second table, **Potentially Applicable Performance Standards by Use**, is intended as a reference for uses assigned to the performance standards category. It identifies common operational and site-related considerations that may warrant objective standards, including hours of operation, noise, lighting, buffering and screening, distance from residential uses, parking and loading, traffic and access, outdoor storage and display, and odor, dust, or emissions. The table is intended as a screening tool; specific standards, thresholds, and applicability would be refined through subsequent ordinance drafting.

The table was developed based on a review of Coventry's existing regulations, discussions with Town staff regarding how these uses are currently regulated, and common regulatory practices in Rhode Island. Those sources informed both the uses included in the table and the performance standards identified as potentially applicable to each use. The matrix reflects an initial screening of the operational and site-related considerations associated with each use; the specific standards, thresholds, and applicability would be refined during ordinance drafting.

At the August 26 meeting, the Commission will be asked to consider both **whether special standards are warranted for individual uses and where those standards should reside**. Some issues may be most appropriately addressed through use-specific zoning standards, while others—such as generally applicable requirements concerning noise, lighting, or similar impacts—may be better addressed elsewhere in Coventry's Code of Ordinances. The objective is to avoid unnecessary or duplicative regulation while ensuring that predictable impacts are adequately addressed.

The use categories shown in both tables—including categories such as restaurants, cafés, drive-through/fast-food restaurants, and other listed uses—are taken directly from the Coventry Zoning Ordinance. The terminology is therefore intended to reflect the Town's existing regulatory framework rather than establish new use classifications at this stage.

The August 26 discussion will be used to identify areas of Commission consensus, uses requiring further consideration, and the appropriate next steps for developing more detailed regulatory recommendations.