

PLANNING REPORT ON:

**AMENDMENT TO CITY OF WARWICK, RI –
ZONING MAP**

POST ROAD RESIDENTIAL PROJECT

PREPARED FOR:

SKYDRA DEVELOPMENT, LLC

PREPARED BY:

**JDL ENTERPRISES
JOSEPH D. LOMBARDO, AICP, PRESIDENT
April 2022**

PURPOSE OF REPORT ~

The purpose of this report is to complete a Planning Report to the City of Warwick with regard to the proposed Zoning Map Amendment by Skydra Development, LLC. This report includes a review of the City's Comprehensive Community Plan, and Zoning Ordinance. In addition, this report provides recognition and consideration of the applicable purposes of the Zoning Ordinance. It is the express purpose of this Planning Report to provide a Summary and Conclusions with respect to the consistency with the Comprehensive Community Plan, the Warwick Station Development District Master Plan, and Zoning Ordinance purpose statements.

PROPOSED ZONING MAP AMENDMENT ~

Skydra Development, LLC proposes to amend the City's Zoning Map by requesting a change of the classification of the following described premises:

Lots # 523 (Project site) on Assessor's Plat 323 is proposed to be changed from **Warwick Station Development District Gateway District**, to **Warwick Station Intermodal District**.

The change of zoning does not require a change to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) in the Comprehensive Plan, nor does it require any other amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (from the Project Narrative):

Proposed Use – The current proposal consists of two residential buildings with a total of 200 residential units. The applicant is proposing a rezone to the Warwick Intermodal District (IM). Under the IM, the project as proposed would meet all dimensional, density, height and parking requirements.

Both buildings are proposed to be four stories and will not exceed the 75' height requirement. The unit mix will be 68 studios, 71 one-bedrooms and 61 two-bedroom units.

The site plan proposes a total of 307 parking space. This would result in a parking ratio of 1.51 spaces per unit which meets the Intermodal District requirement of 1.5 spaces per unit. Based on other projects by the builder, this is an acceptable parking ratio for similar developments they have been completed in similar locations.

The site will be served by public water and sewer located in Post Road. Stormwater on the site will be collected and conveyed to underground stormwater systems which will provide both water quality treatment, peak mitigation control and infiltration, and will meet the City of Warwick and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management requirements.

A schematic landscaping plan includes a streetscape along Post Road and Airport Connector Road. Interior to the site landscaping around the buildings and within the parking field will meet the City of Warwick requirements and provide shading for the parking area and be utilized to create useable outdoor spaces for residents.

DESCRIPTION OF ZONING DISTRICTS ~

The following Zoning District descriptions are appropriate to this application:

CURRENT ZONE DISTRICT ~

301.11B. *Warwick Station Gateway District (Gateway)*. Properties mapped in accordance with subsection [303](#) of this ordinance and which are intended to serve as transitional areas leading to the Intermodal District of the Warwick Station Development District from outlying areas, including the Post Road and Airport Road general business districts. The Gateway District is intended to allow limited commercial uses customarily associated with transportation facilities as well as general commercial uses commonly allowed within general business districts. It is intended that this zone have a high quality of design associated with vehicular circulation and appropriate landscaping and architectural design intended to create a separate identity and a cohesive appearance distinguishable from the outlying areas.

PROPOSED ZONE DISTRICT ~

301.11A *Warwick Station Intermodal District (Intermodal)*. Properties mapped in accordance with subsection [303](#) of this ordinance and which are intended to capitalize on the opportunities resulting from their location in proximity to the Intermodal facility and the Airport terminal, including appropriate complementary uses, pedestrian and vehicular circulation and parking needs, access issues, traffic flow and congestion, lot coverage and height restrictions. The intent of the Intermodal District is to create and sustain an area of regional economic activity consisting of retail, commercial, office and residential uses located on a circulation access spine linking transportation nodes. This area is the core commercial activity area within Warwick Station Development District. It is intended that this zone have a high quality of design for pedestrian use, infrastructure improvements that will enable a flow of users between different transportation nodes and an appropriate density of associated retail, office, residential and hotel uses.

CONSISTENCY AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The following Recommendations are taken from the Comprehensive Community Plan and are deemed applicable and germane to the proposed Zoning Map amendment requested by Skydra Development, LLC:

Vision for 2033 - We are committed to a diversity in land use that promotes a strong, stable tax base, including preserving industrially zoned land for non-retail uses.

LAND USE ELEMENT ~

GOAL: Warwick has sufficient diversity of land uses to support a strong and stable tax base.

GOAL 6. Public and private development meets high standards of urban design.

POLICY • Ensure that proposed new residential, business and industrial uses are compatible with the character and surrounding area.

ACTION ITEM: With guidance from the future land use map, maintain appropriate transitional uses and buffering between commercial and residential districts.

CONSISTENCY AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE WARWICK STATION REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT MASTER PLAN ~

The Master Plan provides a guiding framework for development of office, hotel, residential, and complementary retail and restaurant uses. It describes standards for establishing a high-quality public environment, including pedestrian-oriented streets and public spaces centered around the InterLink, that will help create an environment to attract private development investment and establish a memorable, high-quality gateway to Warwick and Rhode Island. The overall configuration of uses, streets and buildings will create an environment that attracts new economic activity to the site and enhances quality of life for area residents and workers.

Implementing the Master Plan will bring major design and fiscal advantages to Warwick as compared to present land use and development patterns. Major benefits include:

Enhanced quality of life for residents and workers through expanded choices, a stronger sense of community, and the public health benefits associated with walkable environments

VISION

Create a sustainable, livable community. Offer households and workers choices that enhance quality of life: a variety of housing options serving all income ranges and lifestyles; diverse employment options; transportation alternatives to the automobile that are convenient, economical, and healthy; an expanded range of retail and services; and access to public park and recreation facilities.

RESIDENTIAL USE

New housing in the District should include a wide spectrum of unit types, sizes, and prices in order to serve today's diverse housing market and to offer people more housing choices for the different stages of their lives than are available in nearby neighborhoods today. Locating new housing within a convenient walk of transit will also help households economically by reducing their need to bear the added costs of automobile ownership.

Multifamily residential uses are encouraged throughout the District. They are the only use recommended for parcels along Kilvert flanking Imera, and Cottage Street in order to create a proper transition to the detached housing that exists around the site today. Housing should include a range of unit types, sizes and price points across the District and preferably within individual buildings and blocks—to expand choices for households, promote a diverse, mixed income community, and maximize potential market capture and absorption rate.

Height and Massing

The Master Plan has assumed that the allowable height of 75 feet for the area will enable an appropriate level of development to occur. Maximizing the allowable height at intersections should be encouraged as a way to develop a series of active nodes and visually signify their importance.

Streetscape

Because streets will most likely be the largest public open space in the Development District, they should be treated as the major component of the public realm.

Walking

Network Creating an extensive and inviting walking network in the Intermodal District that is integrated well with surrounding areas will improve access, enhance development potential, and make a positive contribution to public health.

Criteria for Identifying Growth Centers

3. Include mixed uses. The vitality of the Warwick Station Development District will be strengthened by its mix of uses. The Master Plan recommends 20%-40% office, 10%-35% hotel, 30%-45% residential, and 10%-20% retail/entertainment.

4. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices. The development plan envisions as much as 675,000 gsf of new multifamily housing built in the District east of the rail corridor. Additional housing is possible to the west. Some units of this housing will be in taller, mixed-use buildings on primary streets with retail and entertainment nearby

THE SUITABILITY QUESTION ~

Again, to reiterate one of the central themes to the Warwick Comprehensive Plan:
Vision for 2033 - We are committed to a diversity in land use that promotes a strong, stable tax base, including preserving industrially zoned land for non-retail uses.

POST ROAD RESIDENTIAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA



According to the Applicant's narrative, the project site of the proposed development is on Assessors Plat 323 - Lot #523 located Post Road in Warwick, Rhode Island. The applicant proposes a 200-unit multi-family residential development on approximately 6.5 acres constructed in two (2) multi-story buildings.

The site is located Northwest of the intersection of Post Road and TF Green Airport Connector Road. Abutting North of the site are the Radisson Hotel, Tavolo Wine Bar & Tuscan Grille and Ocean State Souvenirs, to the east are the Hampton Inn & Suites and Best Western Airport Inn, to the south runs the airport Connector Road and along the west runs the railroad

Under the Intermodal District, the project as proposed would meet all dimensional, density, height and parking requirements.

These land uses can be seen on an aerial view, such as available from Google Earth. The proposed Zoning Map Amendment for the subject property and the designed Master Plan which includes the addition of two new residential buildings is clearly a desirable extension of the existing Intermodal District and of the existing land use pattern in this portion of the City of Warwick and completes the extension of the Intermodal District to the Airport Connector.

***Opinion:** I have reviewed the concept plans prepared by DiPrete Engineering for this project and as a land use planner find that this project is a sound enhancement to the existing Intermodal areas in The Warwick Station Development District. Adding this new Intermodal District as an extension to the existing Intermodal District will improve the success of this bold plan being implemented by the City. The project as designed, meets all the applicable Zoning requirements of the Intermodal District, and particularly as they apply to height & massing, walkability, streetscape and landscaping principals. Finally, as a Growth Center, the project blends well with the mix of uses proposed in the Plan, and provides valuable more urban type housing that supports the other desired uses, office, retail, light manufacturing and the workforce needed for those present and future businesses.*

CONSISTENCY AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE ZONING ORDINANCE ~

The zoning ordinance and all amendments thereto, shall be consistent with the city's comprehensive plan, as described in Rhode Island General Laws Section 22-2 and shall provide for the implementation of the City's comprehensive plan.

- 1007.2. *Review by planning board.* Among its findings and recommendations to the amendment or repeal of this ordinance or zoning map, the planning board shall:

- (A) Include a statement on the general consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan of the city, including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan; and

- (B) Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning as presented in section 100 of this ordinance.

The following purposes are taken from the Zoning Ordinance – Section 100 – Title and Purpose and are deemed applicable and germane to the proposed Zoning Map Amendment by Skydra Development, LLC:

103. - Purpose.

This ordinance is designed to:

- 103.1. Promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of the city.

- 103.2. Provide for a range of uses and intensities of use appropriate to the character of the city and reflect current and expected future needs.

- 103.3. Provide for orderly growth and development which recognizes:
 - (A) The goals and patterns of land use contained in the comprehensive plan of the city adopted pursuant to G.L. 1956, § 45-22.2-1 et seq. (as amended);
 - (B) The natural characteristics of the land, including its suitability for use based on soil characteristics, topography, and susceptibility to surface [water] or groundwater pollution;
 - (E) The availability and capacity of existing and planned public and/or private services and facilities;
 - (F) The need to shape and balance urban and suburban development; and

- 103.7. Provide for the protection of public investment in transportation, water, stormwater management systems, sewage treatment and disposal, solid waste treatment and disposal, schools, recreation, public facilities, open space, and other public requirements.

103.10. Promote a high level of quality in design in the development of private and public facilities.

103.11. Promote implementation of the Warwick comprehensive community plan, as amended.

***Opinion:** I have reviewed the concept plans prepared by DiPrete Engineering for this project and find that at the concept Master Plan stage of site design, for those items above that apply, either the applicant has already made design provisions to comply, or there is adequate land area to accomplish these requirements at subsequent future stages of design and approval by the City Council for the Zoning Map Amendment, as requested for the Intermodal District.*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION ~

It was stated that the express purpose of this Planning Report is to provide a Summary and Conclusion with respect to the Application by Skydra Development, LLC for a change to the City of Warwick Zoning Map. This report described the nature of the request by Skydra Development, LLC to the City and the description of the Zoning Districts as they exist and the specific proposed map amendment. The report then outlined those Goals, Policies and Action items of the **Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan** and the **Warwick Station Redevelopment District Master Plan** that were deemed to be germane to the proposed amendments by Skydra Development, LLC.

Further, the Purposes of the Zoning Ordinance, which were deemed applicable to this application by Skydra Development, LLC, were presented in this report. These purposes of Zoning mirror those in the Zoning Enabling Act – RIGL – Chapter 45-22.2. A discussion regarding suitability was presented to highlight that the proposed use proposed for the property would be in keeping with the current land use pattern of the area.

Approval and development of this project will go towards these Objectives of the Comprehensive Community Plan to:

Ensure that proposed new residential, business and industrial uses are compatible with the character and surrounding area.

and,

Public and private development meets high standards of urban design.

In addition, these pertinent parts of the **Warwick Station Redevelopment District Master Plan** are key considerations to the approval of these requests to the City Council:

New housing in the District should include a wide spectrum of unit types, sizes, and prices in order to serve today's diverse housing market and to offer people more housing choices for the different stages of their lives than are available in nearby neighborhoods today.

Multifamily residential uses are encouraged throughout the District.

Include mixed uses. The vitality of the Warwick Station Development District will be strengthened by its mix of uses. The Master Plan recommends 20%-40% office, 10%- 35% hotel, 30%-45% residential, and 10%-20% retail/entertainment.

Create a range of housing opportunities and choices. Additional housing is possible to the west. Some units of this housing will be in taller, mixed-use buildings on primary streets with retail and entertainment nearby.

This site is perfectly suited to add housing in the City of Warwick because of its location and proximity to transportation hubs, job centers and shopping. This project is a great opportunity to locate housing in an area that can handle the demand and supplement the existing investments already made in this portion of Warwick.

Based on all that has been presented in this written report, it is the professional opinion of Joseph D. Lombardo, AICP, President of JDL ENTERPRISES that the proposed Zoning Map Amendment requested by Skydra Development, LLC is:

**CONSISTENT WITH, AND IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE
ZONING ORDINANCE OF
THE CITY OF WARWICK.**

AND,

**CONSISTENT WITH, AND IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN OF
THE CITY OF WARWICK.**

AND,

**CONSISTENT WITH, AND IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE
WARWICK STATION REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT MASTER PLAN OF
THE CITY OF WARWICK.**

Submitted by,

Joseph D. Lombardo, AICP

Joseph D. Lombardo, AICP

Date: April 2022

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Post Road Residential Project - Warwick RI
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