



SOUTH KINGSTOWN PLANNING DEPARTMENT
PROJECT REVIEW MEMO
Lofts at Fairgrounds
Major Land Development – Comprehensive Permit
Conceptual Master Plan
October 28, 2025

Project Type:	Major Land Development		
Review Stage:	Conceptual Master Plan		
Address:	132 Fairgrounds Road		
Plat:	21-3	Lot:	9
Parcel Size:	20.22 acres	Zoning District:	IND-1
Applicant:	132 Fairgrounds LLC c/o Jonathan Fox 51 DeForest Avenue Summit, NJ 07901	Owner:	Same

Project Description (as outlined in the narrative included in the application)

The project consists of 6 new multi-family buildings and a retail/amenity building at the entrance. Each building provides a mixture of studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units for a total of 311 units. The design team has looked to provide key amenities to the future residents including an in-house fitness center, in-ground swimming pool with hot tub, outdoor passive/active recreation areas, new pedestrian walking paths, outdoor firepit/seating areas, detached covered garage spaces, and an outdoor pet area. The buildings will be professionally managed with onsite staff to serve the future residents.

Outdoor recreational areas are a key focus for the development and have been incorporated into the design. The applicant recognizes the importance of providing common areas (both indoor and outdoor) for the future residents to use. Potential outdoor recreation areas include new walking path connections to create an integrated pedestrian circulation system, an outdoor pet area, an outdoor firepit with seating/meeting area, an in-ground swimming pool and hot tub, and bike racks for multi-modal alternatives.

The architecture of the buildings at The Lofts at Fairgrounds has been an important aspect of the design from the beginning. In addition, the integration of a new residential community adjacent to an industrial building (Norpak, formerly Schneider Electric) which is presently situated amongst several existing industrial type buildings was also identified in the early stages as an important design factor that need significant thought and attention. In this case, Newbury Design Associates have created a site layout and residential community with building facades that the owners believe will be a great addition to the property. The architects will be prepared at the appropriate time to discuss with the board and staff what their design inspirations were, and goals in creating the new buildings.

Housing types include residential multi-family with a mixture of studio (89 units), 1-bedroom (130 units), and 2-bedroom units (92 units), including associated active/passive recreational amenities, an in-ground swimming pool, fitness center, pedestrian walking paths, and outdoor recreation areas. The low- and moderate-income housing units will be equally distributed between each unit type (studio, 1-bedroom, and 2-bedroom).

Building	Floors	Total Units	Unit Types		
			Studio	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom
1	3	27	9	6	12
2	4	60	16	28	16
3	4	60	16	28	16
4	4	44	16	12	16
5	4	60	16	28	16
6	4	60	16	28	16
Totals:		311	89	130	92

Occupancy of the units is estimated as follows:

Unit Type	No. of Units	Per. / Unit	Total	Students
Studio	89	1.5	134	0
1 Bedroom	130	1.5	195	0
2-Bedroom	92	2.1	193	9
Total	311	--	522	9

The applicant anticipates building the project in phases, however, the order and timing of the phases of development has yet to be determined at Master Plan; the economy and general market rates will determine the pacing of the future construction. The applicant does expect that the amenity/retail building will likely be built in Phase 1 to provide recreational options for the residents at the onset.

Regulatory Considerations

Comprehensive Permit - Optional Master Plan – RIGL §45-53-4(d)(2)

An applicant may elect to apply for and be heard on master plan review prior to preliminary plan submission. If a master plan review is elected by the applicant the following shall apply:

- (i) *Submission requirements.* Submission requirements for master plan review shall be limited to the following:
 - (A) An application form and fee;
 - (B) A short description of the project in writing including the number of units, type of housing, density analysis, list of adjustments needed, as well as a location map, and preliminary determinations as to site constraints;
 - (C) Conceptual site plans showing infrastructure locations for roadways, preliminary locations and design of conceptual stormwater facilities, location of sewer and water lines and/or wells and on-site wastewater treatment systems, locations of housing units, estimated locations of site constraints, and wetlands;
 - (D) A preliminary traffic opinion for projects of over thirty (30) dwelling units;
 - (E) A letter of eligibility issued by the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation, or in the case of projects primarily funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or other state or federal agencies, an award letter indicating the subsidy, or application in such form as may be prescribed for a municipal government subsidy;
 - (F) If the applicant submits any requests for adjustments at master plan, a public hearing shall be held in the same manner as during preliminary plan review as set forth in this section and the applicant shall be responsible for providing the list of abutters and all advertising costs.

Zoning Ordinance

- Section 301 (Schedule of Use Regulations Table) prohibits all residential uses except “Loft, Commercial Artist” in the IND-1 Zoning District.
- Section 401 (Schedule of Dimensional Regulations Table) limits the maximum building height in the IND-1 zoning district to forty feet (40’). This project proposes multiple buildings at fifty-nine feet (59’); nineteen feet (19’) above the maximum allowable building height.

Subdivision & Land Development Regulations

Article IV, Section H – Multi-Household Land Development Project

- Section H(3) – Relation to Utilities requires that MHLDP only be located in Zoning Districts where permitted by the Zoning Ordinance.
- Section H(6) - Screening requires screening to provide a physical barrier and visual screen from adjacent properties.
- Section H(7) – Front Yard Setbacks for MHLDP requires a minimum front yard setback of 100 feet along public streets with prohibitions on buildings, parking lots and other utility areas from being located within this setback. A 50’ landscaped or natural buffer zone is required to be maintained along said public street.
- Section H(8) – Density Requirements limits density in a MHLDP to 7.71 units per acre for 1 and 2-bedroom units. However, as a Comprehensive Permit, RIGL § 45-53-4(b)(1) mandates a density bonus of at least 5 units per acre for projects with public water and sewer that provide twenty-five percent (25%) affordable housing. These local and state requirements combine to allow a total density of at least 12.71 units per acre. *(The project proposes 311 units over 10.87 acres, a density of 28.6 units per acre.)*
- Section H(9) – Supplementary Standards
 - Limits uses in an MHLDP to residential uses or uses customarily accessory thereto. *(The proposed project contemplates some retail uses.)*
 - Requires parking lots and driveways to be set back at least 15’ from principal buildings. *(Most buildings appear to be less than 10’ from parking areas or driveways.)*
 - Minimum distance between buildings is 50’. This distance may be reduced to 25’ for building ends with no windows. *(Distances between the Amenities Bldg., Bldg. 1 and Bldg. 2, and the distance between Bldgs. 5 and 6 appear to be less than 30’ on building ends with windows.)*
 - Floor area of accessory uses is limited to 2.5% of the MHLDP’s total residential floor area with a maximum of 800 sq. ft. per structure.
 - 10% of the developable area (~5,653 square feet) must be dedicated as open space, type dictated by occupants and approved by the Planning Board.

NOTE: By submitting this project as a Comprehensive Permit the applicant is authorized by statute to deviate from the requirements of many Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations in return for restricting at least 25% of the units for low and/or moderate-income housing.

Requested Adjustments

Via an updated request for adjustments dated September 25, 2025, the applicant requests the following adjustments:

- (1) Zon. Ord. – Art. 3, Sec. 301, Use Regulations - Zone Change/Use Variance – Multifamily Household Land Development Project Use not permitted in IND-1 zoning district.
- (2) Zon. Ord. – Art. 4, Sec. 401, Dimensional Regs - Maximum Structure Height – 59 ft. of height proposed on some buildings where a maximum of 40 ft. is permitted in the IND-1 zone.

(3) Subdiv. & Land Devel. Regs. – Art. IV, Sec. H – Multi-Household Land Development Project

- Section H(3) – Relation to Utilities requires that MHLDP only be located in Zoning Districts where permitted by the Zoning Ordinance.
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(4) RI Housing Letter of Eligibility – Applicant requests that submission of the Letter of Eligibility be allowed to be submitted prior to final Master Plan approval.

The applicant has not requested adjustments with respect to other local regulatory requirements, including: dimensional setbacks, building size (*units per building*), density (*units per acre*), non-residential uses in a MHLDP, landscape buffers, separation distances between buildings or separation distances between buildings and parking areas/driveways.

Decision Deadline

In accordance with legislative changes adopted in July 2025 that became effective immediately upon enactment, the applicant has opted to file a Master Plan application as part of their Comprehensive Permit application.

The application was received on August 29, 2025, and a Notice of Incomplete Submission was issued on September 18, 2025. The application was certified complete on October 14, 2025.

Under the 2025 legislative changes, the Planning Board has sixty (**60**) days (*previously 90 days*) from the date the application was certified complete to render a decision on a Comprehensive Permit Optional Master Plan, through and including **Monday, December 15, 2025**, unless the applicant agrees to an extension of time in writing.

Required Findings

In accordance with [RIGL § 45-53-4\(d\)\(2\)\(iii\)\(C\)](#), as amended July 2025, the following findings are required at the Optional Master Plan stage of review for all Comprehensive Permit applications:

“In voting on an application, the local review board shall make findings, supported by legally competent evidence on the record that discloses the nature and character of the observations upon which the fact finders acted, on the standards required for preliminary plan review in this section, to the extent applicable at the master plan. The failure to provide information which is required later at preliminary plan review shall not form a basis for denial. If the board votes to defer a finding to preliminary plan it shall do so on the record during the proceedings and in the written decision and specify what items are necessary for review at the preliminary plan stage in order to address that finding.”

Draft Motion

For most conventional subdivision/land development applications staff will provide the board with a draft motion for consideration as part of the Project Review Memo in order to allow the Board to advance applications for approval with minimal delay where the Board finds the application acceptable. *However*, for more complex applications (including comprehensive permit applications) involving multiple or significant departures from the Zoning Ordinance or Subdivision Regulations or novel proposals, staff will defer the presentation of a draft motion until after the first hearing with the Board. By deferring the draft motion until after this hearing staff will have the benefit of listening to the Board’s initial evaluation of the application, the relief sought, the standards for approval/denial, and potential conditions of approval, thereby enabling staff to craft a more fully developed draft motion for the next meeting.