



Preliminary Plan Supplement to Submission Requirements

December 20, 2024

DiPrete Engineering (DE) has prepared the following Preliminary Plan narrative to supplement the submission materials and provide additional details for the proposed residential development. South County Commons (SCC) Buildings 26 & 28 are presented as a Comprehensive Permit application, in accordance with the State of Rhode General Law 45-53-4. As required by the Comprehensive Permit, 25% of the proposed units will be set aside as affordable units. The goal for this site is to create a residential development that not only meets the state law, but also offers new housing options for those who want more affordable and other alternatives. The submitted plans are the same design that you and Jamie reviewed with us on August 27, 2024, with the addition of more detail on the architecture and floor plans. The applicant's team also presented the application to the Planning Board as a Pre-Application Conference on October 22, 2024 to gather initial feedback prior to the official Comprehensive Permit application.

The design of the proposed residential buildings has been created with a sensitivity to the adjacent buildings, parking areas, pedestrian paths, and with a similar-scale to the already constructed portions of South County Commons. Special emphasis has been placed on:

- Finishing the streetscape of Village Square Drive
- Completing the pedestrian connections between the hotel and the main street
- Creating compatible architecture between the Hampton Inn (Building 27), the Brown University Dermatology Building (Building 25), and new Buildings 26 and 28
- Creating a focal point at the terminus of Fieldstone Drive
- Creating an outdoor park and recreation area south of the Hampton Inn with additional pedestrian connections
- Creating new rental housing alternatives with elevator access, which sets it apart from the vast majority of the existing supply of rental housing in South Kingstown. This allows the buildings to serve an older demographic.

The planning process has involved much thought and preparation to create new buildings that will offer a high-quality residential development as part of the South County Commons mix of uses. It is intended to meet the needs of many current South Kingstown residents with alternatives for pricing and feasible housing options. The concept of additional residential uses in South County Commons has been studied for over a decade and the current plan has been developed over the past several months by a team of experts in the fields of architecture, engineering, surveying, financial viability, construction, and land planning. The additional residential units are intended to add to the vibrancy of the South County Commons retail, office, restaurant, and service tenants and provide additional community sustainability to the businesses in the off-season.

This narrative explains the design development and provides extra information that is not shown on the plans. It also emphasizes the features and amenities of the plan that the designers and applicant believe are important and beneficial to the town and future residents. The applicant recognizes that there will be significant additional time and resources needed to advance the design and obtain the required state and local regulatory approvals, and address any possible Planning Board concerns.

Comprehensive Permit Process

South County Commons Buildings 26 & 28 are presented as a Comprehensive Permit application in accordance with the State of Rhode Island General Law 45-53-4. This law, effective January 1, 2024, allows an applicant proposing to build low- or moderate-income housing to submit to the local review board a single application for a comprehensive permit to build 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.

Municipal government subsidies, including adjustments and zoning incentives, are to be made available to applications under this law to offset the differential costs of the low- or moderate-income housing units in a development. At a minimum, a municipality shall provide an applicant with more dwelling units than allowed by-right under its zoning ordinance in the form of a density bonus to allow an increase in the allowed dwelling units per acre, as well as other incentives and municipal government subsidies.

Project Overview

The project consists of two (2) new multi-family buildings within The Village at South County Commons. Each building provides fifty-two (52) units with a mixture of studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units. Building 26 is located on the vacant, grassed land adjacent to existing Building 25 and was previously approved as an office building with a similar building footprint. Building 28 is a newly proposed building located in the existing overflow parking lot behind the Hampton Inn.

The design team has looked to provide key amenities to the future residents including an in-house fitness center, work-from-home workspaces, tenant storage space, outdoor passive/active recreation areas, and new pedestrian connections to the existing walking paths. 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 the existing paths to create an integrated pedestrian circulation system
- Outdoor grilling patio with seating/meeting area
- Pickleball court
- Outdoor pet area
- Outdoor seating/meeting area with firepit amenity
- Bike racks for use with the adjacent South County bike path
- Activation and integration of an underutilized area originally meant for recreation behind the Hampton Inn. The belief is that with the additional residents the critical mass necessary to have an active outdoor park area will be successful.

The architecture of the buildings at South County Commons has been an important part of its success from the beginning. The intent has always been to use different architects, with different styles to create buildings that are not only compatible but complement the other buildings at South County Commons. In this case, Hans Strauch from Cambridge, MA has created 2 new buildings that the owners of South County Commons believe will be a great addition to the village. The new buildings are at or below the heights of the adjacent buildings, of similar form and materials, but varying in detail, colors, and focal points. 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.

Density Analysis

The applicant recognizes that there may be discretion in how the town prefers the density to be calculated. There will be a subdivision plan submitted in the future to modify lot lines to create standalone lots that these 2 new residential buildings will be located on. The future lot lines are depicted on the submitted Preliminary Plans. It is likely that these will be the only 2 buildings located on the new lots. South County Commons was created with cross easements to permit parking and access throughout the village. No individual lot today stands alone from a parking, open space requirement, density, or zoning compliance. The parking will continue to be shared across lot lines for the new and existing buildings and uses. This area of the South County Commons development has already been modified several times. It was last modified when Building 25 was built.

The affiliated owners of South County Commons own 11 separate parcels totaling 65 acres with 1,027 parking spaces and no residential units. Three (3) lots that were originally part of South County Commons and not currently owned by this applicant and its affiliates have residential uses. Proposed Buildings 26 and 28 are affiliated with the owners of the 11 South County Commons mixed-use parcels, but not with the 3 residential parcels. The density in the Route 1 Special Management District (SMD) zoning for South County Commons has been calculated over the entire village property since 1999. If it is across the mixed use parcels that the applicant controls or is affiliated with today, it would be about 1.6 units per acre (104 units on 65 acres). If the density was to be taken across the future parcel that the units would be located on, it would be about 5.0 units per acre (104 units over 20.8 acres). Regardless of how the density is calculated, the applicant has determined that the density being proposed is the minimal number of units to be successful, feasible, and financeable without a significant additional financial subsidy. The applicant also believes that the size of the future buildings and the use are appropriate and beneficial to The Village at South County Commons.

List of Adjustments Requested

In support of the Comprehensive Permit application, the applicant is respectfully requesting the following adjustments to the local ordinances and regulations:

- South Kingstown Zoning Ordinance
 - Section 605.9.D.4. Multi-household Land Development Projects (two (2) bedrooms or less per unit):
 - *Maximum residential density – Five (5) dwelling units per developable acre*
 - Adjustment requested to allow the 104 dwelling units within the 65 acres owned by the applicant and its affiliates.
 - *Maximum building size – 30 dwelling units per building and 160 feet in length*
 - Adjustment requested to fifty-two (52) dwelling units per building and 270 feet in length
 - *Rear yard parking and service lane access are required*
 - Adjustment requested (if necessary) for this requirement given the unique nature of the existing South County Commons development. Building 26 is situated on a previously approved pad site that has existing parking and access on 3 sides and there is parking in the rear. Building 28 is located behind the Hampton Inn in an area used for overflow parking. No new parking is being added as part of the application.

- *Minimum separation between buildings: Minimum separation between buildings: Thirty (30) feet for buildings containing four (4) units or fewer, fifty (50) feet for buildings containing five (5) residential units or more.*
- Adjustment requested (if necessary) to allow 18 feet separation between existing Building 25 and proposed Building 26. The distance that is being proposed is the same as was previously approved and is appropriate for this area of South County Commons.
- Section 605.13. Building Height – buildings shall be limited to a maximum height of forty (40) feet. Buildings which at their nearest point to Route 1 are situated at a grade lower than Route 1 shall be permitted one (1) additional foot in height for each foot below Route 1, up to a maximum of forty-five (45) feet in height. No building over forty (40) feet in height can have a flat roof.
- Adjustment (if necessary) requesting 50 feet if measured from proposed grade at the front of the proposed building. 52 feet if measured from the average grade as approved by the Planning Board in the previous submission and partially constructed. Building 26 height has been designed to complement the abutting Building 25 height and to match the aesthetics and external appearance. Building 26 height is less than or equal to the abutting Building 25. Building 28 has been designed to provide a height less than or equal to the adjacent Hampton Inn. The proposed heights are consistent with what has previously been approved for this district of South County Commons.
- Section 605.14. Parking Standards and Section 711.A. Minimum Off-Street Parking Requirements – Residential:
 - *Apartments or multi-household dwellings – Minimum Parking Spaces of 2 for each dwelling unit*
 - Adjustment requested (if necessary) for one (1) parking space per dwelling unit in conformance with RIGL 45-53-4.(b)(2) that states:

“A municipality shall not require more than one off-street parking space per dwelling unit for units up to and including two (2) bedrooms in applications submitted under this chapter”.

The applicant also proposes to utilize the shared parking allowance per Zoning Ordinance Section 605.14.C. Shared Parking, which states:

“Common parking areas shall be encouraged for mixed-use developments which have different hours, days and/or seasons of peak parking demand. The board may, in approving development within the district, permit individual parking standards to be reduced for separate uses where it can be demonstrated that adequate parking may be made available on a shared basis. The board may require written easements or other assurances as may be required to enforce shared parking arrangements. Where reasonable and practicable, the planning board shall require common driveways and interconnected parking lots in order to facilitate shared parking.”

The applicant currently manages and is knowledgeable of the existing and future parking requirements of South County Commons and believes that:

- 1) There is an abundance and an excess in the amount of existing parking available in the southern districts of the village.

- 2) The shared parking design from 1999 has worked well at South County Commons and with the new residential buildings being an off-peak of the predominate office use in the southern districts, the shared parking will continue to work well.
 - 3) The residential buildings have over half of the units proposed as studios and 1 bedroom units which will not have a significant parking demand.
 - 4) South County Commons continues to evolve, and the parking demand has been declining. The hotel now sees guests arrive via ride sharing. The theatre has been renovated and gone from 1,256 seats to 475 seats. The offices are no longer full 5 days per week.
- Previous South County Commons Master Plan Approval
 - Adjustment requested to permit the construction of two (2) new 52-unit multi-family residential buildings on the proposed lots in District 4 of South County Commons. The previous applications did not propose residential uses within District 4.
 - Adjustment requested to permit the construction of new Building 28 as a 52-unit multi-family residential building that was not previously proposed on the Master Plan.
 - The applicant requests adjustments (if necessary) to the various Route 1 Special Management District (SMD) design guidance and regulations and Land Development Regulations such as Build-to-Line, yard setbacks, parking location, architectural standards (if required) and other requirements and guidance of the Route 1 SMD, zoning, and land development regulations to permit the design as shown on the submitted Site Plans.

Impact Analysis

- Sanitary Sewer – the previously approved Sewer Study dated December 2004 had a projected sewer flow at 141,470 gallons per day (gpd) for the South County Commons pump station. Much of this flow never materialized due to multiple reasons such as water conservation practices, the nature of the tenants, and the changing demographics of the property. Full buildout now with the inclusion of proposed Buildings 26 and 28 is projected to be about 85,000 gpd and well below the 141,470 gpd anticipated flow (approximately 60% of the previously approved flow).
- Municipal Water – in unison with the anticipated sanitary sewer flow calculations, the previously approved water demand had a projected flow at 141,470 gallons per day (gpd). Much of this flow never materialized due to multiple reasons such as water conservation practices, the nature of the tenants, and the changing demographics of the property. Full buildout now with the inclusion of proposed Buildings 26 and 28 is projected to be below 85,000 gpd and well below the 141,470 gpd anticipated flow (approximately 60% of the previously approved flow).
- Traffic – Updated traffic counts have recently been collected at the Route 1 intersection to understand the present day counts and how the 2 proposed residential buildings integrate into the intersection function.

In looking at the trip generation numbers, South County Commons with the addition of Buildings 26 & 28 will be consistent with, and slightly less than what had originally been estimated in the approved 2004 study. As you see below, South County Commons will generate 108 less trips in the AM and 51 less trips in the PM peak periods under full buildout. This is a very good estimate versus actual values for such a large-scale village development.

It should also be noted that the base Route 1 peak hour volumes were also less than what had been projected for base growth in the previous analysis. Therefore, the original analysis

conclusion of a good overall Level of Service (LOS) C for the AM and PM peaks at the signalized site access driveway remain valid, and the results will actually be better than projected.

<u>Originally Projected</u>	<u>Actual Site Trips</u>	<u>Final Projected Trips with Apartments</u>	
<u>AM Peak</u>			
Enter 370	Enter 260	Enter 269	
<u>Exit 267</u>	<u>Exit 230</u>	<u>Exit 260</u>	
Total 637	Total 490	Total 529	(17% reduction)
 <u>PM Peak</u>			
Enter 353	Enter 370	Enter 395	
<u>Exit 454</u>	<u>Exit 345</u>	<u>Exit 361</u>	
Total 807	Total 715	Total 756	(6% reduction)

Comprehensive Permit Additional Materials:

- Letter of Eligibility from R.I. Housing – the application submission includes the Letter of Eligibility for both Buildings 26 & 28.
- Request for Single Application and Adjustments Sought – the applicant respectfully requests that the South Kingstown Planning Board review the application as a single application as allowed by RIGL for Comprehensive Permit applications. The adjustments requested have been detailed within the “List of Adjustments Requested” section above.
- Timetable for Construction – the applicant intends to construct the 2 new buildings within 12-18 months upon receipt of all state and local approvals. The applicant is hopeful to begin construction in Summer/Fall of 2025.
- Sample Deed Restriction – in following the R.I. Housing template, the application includes a sample deed restriction for review by the Town Solicitor. This follows the standard format that has been reviewed and approved by previous Comprehensive Permit applications.
- Monitoring Agent – the applicant is proposing to work with Melina Lodge of The Housing Network of Rhode Island/Community Housing Land Trust of Rhode Island unless the town has another preference.
- Project Financial Pro Forma – the application includes the project pro forma, which was submitted and approved by R.I. Housing as part of the Letter of Eligibility.
- State Permits – the applicant is applying for a RIDEM Freshwater Wetlands Permit Modification concurrently with the Preliminary Plan submission. A copy of the DEM permit will be provided to the town upon receipt and is necessary prior to final approval per state law.