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Several new restaurants opening in the City Centre Warwick District - by Frank Picozzi

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Frank Picozzi

A number of new residential projects are already underway in or planned for the City Centre Warwick District – including hundreds of apartment units, condominiums, and single-family houses – and now, as momentum continues to grow, we're also seeing several new restaurants coming to the area.

At 1759 Post Rd., in a building that was once the home of Walt's Roast Beef, Baja's Restaurants opened up shop last month with a celebration that included free burritos for patrons who stopped by. This is the 17th location for the company, which has restaurants throughout Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. The founder, David Boutrous, arrived in America as a youth and slowly grew his business into a successful chain. Upon his passing in September, the company publicly noted David's dream of reaching 20 Baja locations and affirmed its intention to fulfill that dream. The Warwick spot brings it one step closer to realizing his goal. We are pleased to welcome a company with a commitment to quality service, community, generosity, and family to our city.

Over at 163 Kilvert St., just yards away from one of the new residential developments, renovation work is moving ahead to bring new life to a structure built in 1875, and, in 1925, moved 50 ft. to its current location, atop a "hole pour" foundation. The new look includes a partial stone façade, new siding, large windows and a small patio to accommodate outdoor seating. It's anticipated that "Joe's Pizza" will quickly become popular, given that the proprietor already runs a successful fry shack and food truck business in Warwick.

Any pizza aficionados in the area will also be thrilled to learn that, only a short trip from Joe's, another pizza parlor will be opening in City Centre. Caspian Pizza's future home at 1995 Post Rd. is a former gas station constructed in 1965. The attached canopy that once covered the gas pumps will be removed and replaced by a shorter, modern one that still retains the feel of the original structure. The building is slated for some modern touches, but the exterior brick will remain, spruced up by a good cleaning and fresh paint. New plantings will also provide a pleasing aesthetic and enhance overall landscaping improvements that have been made on properties throughout the area.

These development initiatives are all part of the vision for City Centre that was established to capitalize on the convergence of air, rail (the intermodal InterLink train station with MBTA commuter access), and I-95 and I-295 to transform the area into a vibrant, 24/7, live/work/play neighborhood. A diverse mix of supportive uses, such as restaurants, offices, shops and services for residents and nearby hotel guests is part of the vision. It's so exciting to see the concept coming to life!

Development opportunities are plentiful throughout City Centre and the community as a whole. If you're interested in learning how you can be part of these efforts, please contact the Economic Development Department at (401) 738-2014 or email econ.dir@warwickri.gov

Frank Picozzi is the mayor of the city of Warwick, R.I.

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