

Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission

28 Commercial Street ♦ Concord, NH 03301

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July 18, 2025

Town of Canterbury
Planning Board
5 East Main Street
PO Box 500, Canterbury, NH 03224

Re: Development of Regional Impact:
“Major Subdivision 114 West Road”

Dear Members of the Planning Board:

We have reviewed the application material transmitted for a major subdivision at 114 West Road for a mixed-use development on the south side of West Road adjacent to I-93.

As you know, RSA Chapter 36:54-58 deals with the review of Developments of Regional Impact. Section 36:55 lists a series of characteristics that “could reasonably be expected to impact on a neighboring municipality.” This review is therefore focused only on the factors listed in the RSA and includes the following:

- I. Relative size or number of dwelling units as compared with the existing stock.
- II. Proximity to the borders of a neighboring community.
- III. Transportation networks.
- IV. Anticipated emissions such as light, noise, smoke, odors, or particles.
- V. Proximity to aquifers or surface waters which transcend municipal boundaries.
- VI. Shared facilities such as schools or solid waste disposal facilities.

Finally, it is important to note that if the application is approved, it would require site plan approval by the Planning Board as well as Condominium Subdivision approval.

CNHRPC’s review of the proposal:

- I. Relative to the number of dwelling units – CNHRPC understands that 34 (or 35) units are proposed. The plans only show what appears to be 34 condominium lots but testimony at the June 24th. Planning Board hearing states that 35 units are proposed. The 35 additional units would represent a 0.1% increase in Canterbury and the surrounding communities’ housing stock.
- II. Transportation networks – The project entrance is located opposite to the northbound off and on ramps at Exit 18 of I-93. NH DOT will require a traffic study before permitting any driveway of this magnitude at the interchange. It is recommended that this driveway permit be obtained from NH DOT prior to approval since it may require a significant redesign to the project entrance.

Impacts to I-93 Exit 18 interchange are of regional concern. While the location is physically close to Boscawen, there is no direct connection between the two towns and any impact should be insignificant. Northfield and Concord are a significant distance from the site. Except for school related trips most work and shopping trips, due to the proximity to Exit 18, would most likely utilize I-93 to the north and south.

A Traffic Study by a professional Traffic Engineer might be helpful to provide clarification of the expected traffic generation, directional distribution, intersection turning movements and level of service, and safety issues.

- III. Anticipated Emissions & Noise – As there was no information provided to the type of non-residential uses proposed, CNHRPC could not make a determination in regard to anticipated noise and emissions following construction.
- IV. Proximity to shared aquifers or surface waters – It was noted in the June 24, 2025, Planning Board meeting minutes that the area is within a significant aquifer per the Canterbury 2023 aquifer map. It was noted that a community water supply is proposed providing 14-28 thousand gallons per day. No analysis was provided of the aquifer's suitability or impact of this level of withdrawal at this location. It appears that there are wetland and wetland buffer impacts associated with access to the proposed community well. No information was noted in the plans. This may be a legibility problem.

The drainage design appears to have been based on a drainage study. Impacts to Cold Brook, which is a tributary of the Merrimack River, should be addressed. Maintaining no net discharges where possible reduces the impact of downstream flooding better than simply managing peak flow since the time of concentration is different from location to location.

- VII. Shared facilities (schools, sewer, water, emergency response agreements) Canterbury shares a school district with Belmont. Students in Canterbury participate in the Shaker Regional School District. A recent study by the NH Housing Finance Authority indicates that a residential building with two (2) units contributes 0.25 students to the school system per unit.¹ This suggests the development could add about nine (9) children to the school system. The Shaker Regional School System has seen lower but stable enrollment over the last 4 years but has seen an increase in enrollment in 2024, not seen in nearly a decade.

Canterbury is also part of the Capitol Area Mutual Aid Fire Compact and emergencies on site could involve responses by surrounding communities if they were large enough, or if multiple emergencies were occurring in Town. The commercial area in the southern area of the site is served by a single road over 2,000 feet in length making it difficult to reach in an emergency and impossible if

¹ *From Homes to Classrooms*, NH CDFA, September 2024; Page 35, Figure 5.15: https://www.nhhfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/From_Homes_To_Classrooms_2024.pdf

the road was made impassible in some fashion preventing fire, police, and EMS services from reaching the site except by air or on foot.

CNHRPC believes that there may be regional impacts because of transportation networks, surface water, and shared facilities. Based upon this, CNHRPC recommends that:

1. Transportation networks – A traffic study should be provided for the proposal to clarify the extent of any local or regional impacts and any mitigation or design changes that may be necessary at the entrance at West Road and the I-93 Exit 18 interchange.
2. Proximity to shared aquifers or surface waters – A stormwater study should be provided for the proposal as part of the approval process. If not part of the normal review process particular attention should be paid to the impact of 25- and 100-year storm events to reduce or eliminate an increased post development runoff and impacts to Cold Brook and the Merrimack River.
3. Shared facilities – Seek input from the Canterbury Fire Department with the suggested assistance of the State Fire Marshall to mitigate any risks associated with the isolated commercial area on the southern portion of the site.

With regard to impacts on the Shaker Regional School District, CNHRPC recommends that a school impact study be provided, and input be sought from the Superintendent regarding potential impacts on school capacity.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this development. Please contact CNHRPC at 603-226-6020 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Stephen Henninger
Project Planner