

## Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission

28 Commercial Street ♦ Concord, NH 03301

Telephone: (603) 226-6020 ♦ Fax: (603) 226-6023 ♦ www.cnhrpc.org



### DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL IMPACT REVIEW MEMO

Date: October 18, 2017

To: Concord Planning Board

From: Stephen Henninger AICP, CNHRPC Project Planner *SH*

RE: Development of Regional Impact Review for a request by Interchange Development LLC, to modify the conditions of a Covenant, and rezone 14.5 acres off Whitney Road, involving all of parcel 06/P5 and 4.6 acres of parcel 06/9/6 from a mixture of CU – Urban Commercial and IN – Industrial at the southeast intersection of Whitney Road and Hoit Road (US 4). The removal of the restrictive covenants would allow the retail area to expand from a maximum of 50,000 sf to approximately 85,000 sf.

The CNHRPC performed a general review of the materials associated with the October 17, 2017, Concord Planning Board Agenda. Attached to the agenda was the applicant's request, the applicant's revised request, a copy of the restrictive covenant, a staff report, and a report from the City of Concord Traffic Engineer.

While no development is proposed at this time, except for the existing convenience store/fueling station on parcel 06/P/5 at 1 Whitney Road, the applicants request would allow for substantially more retail development than what would be permitted today.

The major issues associated with this project are traffic related and the potential for the project to adversely impact the future development of Penacook Village and King Street in Boscawen.

#### Regional Perspective

CNHRPC recommends the Concord Planning Board consider the following regional issues:

1. Traffic
2. Economic Impact on Penacook Village/King Street in Boscawen

#### 1. TRAFFIC

The limitations of the Whitney Road/US 4/Boyce Road intersection as it is currently designed to accommodate additional retail development was well documented by the May 2012 Traffic Impact and Site Access Study (TISAS). The impacts identified from the construction of the convenience store/fueling station in the 2012 study *"have been generally realized, since that development, daily traffic flows on Whitney road just south of Hoit Road have increased from about 1,000 vehicles per day to about 5,000*

*vehicles per day. Peak hour delays for left turning vehicles are now notable, with staff aware of increasing concerns from delayed drivers.”<sup>1</sup>*

*” (City) staff does concur with the TISAS finding that signal warrants will be clearly met if an additional 46,000 sf of retail space is added .... Substantial intersection enlargement would be needed in addition to installation of traffic signals. This would include the widening of Hoit Road in the area of the intersection to provide a five-lane section: two through lanes in each direction plus a dedicated left-turn lane.”<sup>1</sup>*

In meeting with NHDOT in 2012, the Department advised that due to the close proximity of the subject intersection to the southbound ramps at I-93 Exit 17, any mainline lane widening to US 4/Hoit Rd at the Whitney Road Intersection must be extended easterly to the southbound on-ramp intersection, and indicated that alterations to this intersection may be required.

The City Traffic Engineer indicated that *“Improvements at this intersection (CIP 30) are programmed in FY 2025. \$2.25M is the current budget estimate, with \$2.05M anticipated from donations or private development and \$0.20M anticipated from general impact fees.”<sup>1</sup>* Please be advised due to actions made by the City Council on October 10, 2017, the amount of money to be collected from general traffic impact fees has been substantially reduced.

*“Central NH Regional Planning Commission (NHRPC) has included this project in its current FY19-28 10-year Transportation Improvement Plan for the region. CNHRPC submitted this recommendation to the NHDOT, however the subject project is not being considered in the current draft of the State’s latest 10-year plan.”<sup>1</sup>* No public or private funding has been allocated to date to improve, or even study this interchange, as well as the intersection of Whitney Road/Boyce Road/US 4 Hoit Rd. Following the release of the draft Ten (10) Year Plan, CNHRPC has advocated for the inclusion of funding to undertake an engineering study of this intersection.

**Recommendation:** A study needs to be funded and completed to determine the necessary traffic improvements required to support any additional retail development at this location. As part of this study, potential funding scenarios should be evaluated and participation in the study by the NHDOT, the City, and the Towns of Canterbury and Boscawen, along with affected property owners is essential.

## **2. ECONOMIC IMPACTS**

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The present Urban Commercial –CU was an attempt to allow greater flexibility in creating a commercial node at this location, at the request of the applicant, without creating a new commercial area that would adversely affect Penacook Village. The City at the time was well aware that the zoning applied to this location was not designed for an area like this. But the compromise reached was deemed to be reasonably consistent with the Master Plan when the Restrictive Covenant was applied. With surface parking, 10,000 sf building for retail uses per useable acre is used for estimating future development potential. A five acre retail commercial area would likely to generate up to 50,000 sf feet of gross floor area consistent with the restrictive covenant on the property.

It is clear that the demand for additional retail space is limited in the region. Nationwide it has been estimated is that up to 1/3 of the existing retail space is no longer required. The creation of a larger commercial node at this location could act to siphon additional non-residential development from Penacook Village and Fisherville Road, and from the Town of Boscawen along King Street (US 3 & US 4).

A complete streets improvement plan for King Street (US 4 & US 3) is currently included in the 2019-2028 Regional Transportation Plan, and has been included in the draft 10 Year State Transportation Plan. The Town of Boscawen's goal is to increase the intensity of development in this corridor that is suitable for pedestrian, bicycle, as well as motorized vehicle users along King Street.

**Recommendation:** The impact on the future redevelopment/development in Penacook Village/Fisherville Road, as well as King Street in Boscawen, should be addressed when considering the rezoning and/or release of the restrictive covenant on the Whitney Road property.

<sup>1</sup> "Traffic Considerations - Proposed Whitney Road Rezoning", Robert J. Mack, PE, PTOE, Traffic Engineer, report to City Planner dated September 28, 2017.

Thank you for providing CNHRPC with the opportunity to comment on this development of regional impact.